

Mr. Sinister

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Mr. Sinister

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Summary

“So, what are you going to do about it?” Will asks.

“About what?”

“About him. He was so rude to you.”

“What’s to be done about that?” Hannibal asks nonchalantly in return.

What if Will ran away with Hannibal before Mizumono and they went to Italy like they were meant to? Enter a murder husbands in Florence AU: The perfect combination of domestic fluff, sorting out feelings, and of course — blood and murder.

Notes

This fic will be multi-chaptered and it is the second in a series of 3 (planned). You do not have to read the first fic in the series to know what's going on, but there will be a few references to it so it might help put things in perspective. You can find that first fic [here](#).

The timeline may seem slightly confusing, but just know that the events in the first fic (hannigram getting together) happen before Will sleeps with Margot and Mason fucks up his own face. Mizumono doesn't happen at all :) Warnings are in the tags, enjoy!

Caffè Latte

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Florence is beautiful. Will is mesmerised by the sea of white ornate buildings, ginger-colored brick roofs, majestic museums, and sublime art galleries. The whole city is saturated with a warm tint, almost sepia, as if suspended in time.

They settle into a compact but charming apartment in the inner city that Hannibal acquired prior to them arriving. The basic furniture is already there, just the necessary items so far, but they're all pristine and vintage, each piece undoubtedly picked out by Hannibal to match his luxurious taste. Will didn't expect anything less.

Days and weeks go by, but the illusion of timelessness persists. Hannibal attains a position at the Palazzo Capponi, something to both fulfill his passion towards history and the fine arts, and to occupy his time. Will asks if that required removing any variables from the existing equation — human variables, to be precise. Hannibal just smiles and tells him that he filled the job vacancy based on his own merits. For once, Will believes him.

He knows what Hannibal is, knows his taste for blood and violence. He can even see the appeal in it, after having tasted a spoonful of it himself. Will has never felt any revulsion towards the ever-growing number of bodies Hannibal has left behind in his lifetime, nor towards his rather unique dietary preferences. So, if Hannibal had created another body here in Florence to produce a job vacancy, he'd have no reason to hide it from Will. At least, that's what Will tries to tell himself.

While Hannibal is busy at the Palazzo, Will fills the long days with exploring the city and learning Italian. It isn't the easiest language, but they have endless time on their hands. There's no ticking clocks, no finite vacation days, no return plane tickets. When they arrived in Florence, they left behind more than just their winter clothes.

It's a new beginning. A fresh start. A clean slate. Will can think of many names for the drastic turn that his life took, but none fully capture its true, complex nature. His life has been a wild ride since the moment he met Hannibal, so it is only fitting that he finds himself in a

new country, settling into a new kind of life he never imagined he'd have. Sharing all of it with the man who Will never imagined would reciprocate his feelings.

Will can only describe their new life here as lovely, wonderful and idyllic. Perfect even, if such a thing exists. Whenever Hannibal isn't required to work early in the morning at the Palazzo, they have lavish breakfast at one of the luxurious cafes at the Piazza del Duomo, feeding each other macarons or strawberries and watching the masses of tourists crowd around the Florence Cathedral. Sometimes they simply watch each other, getting lost in one another's features like established couples do.

Will orders a latte. His Italian is satisfactorily smooth, considering they'd only been in the country for a couple of weeks. The waitress seems to understand him, despite the heavy American accent that lingers in his voice. So when she brings him a glass of warm milk, Will raises his eyebrows in confusion.

Hannibal looks at him over the top of his designer sunglasses and chuckles. "You have to say caffè latte, darling. Otherwise you're just ordering milk."

Will narrows his eyes and aggressively sips his milk. His mind firmly decides that from now on he'll only ever order cappuccinos, to avoid confusion and embarrassment — while his heart firmly decides that he quite likes being called darling.

Will didn't think he'd ever use the phrase "established couple" when thinking about his own life. The concept has always felt foreign, not something that would apply to him. He's always been a lone wolf, a stranger to romance. His small number of sexual partners never stuck around long enough to be labeled as *romantic* partners. So it's quite jarring to Will when he realizes that is exactly what he has with Hannibal.

Or is it? Will's not completely sure. Since he's never been in an official relationship before, he doesn't know if this thing with Hannibal he's found himself in now qualifies. Are they dating? Are they committed to each other? Do serial killers even date?

Will doesn't know, and he's sure as hell not asking Hannibal about their relationship status.

He enjoys having picnics at the Boboli Gardens during Hannibal's days off, and taking evening strolls along the Vecchio Bridge and the Vasari Corridor. He likes living with Hannibal, sharing meals, and all-around fulfilling the label "established couple". It's a nice change for Will, to feel so connected to someone that romance comes naturally.

Hannibal's highly regarded position at the Palazzo gives them premium access to the best sights of Florence outside the normal visitor hours, allowing them to get lost in the art — and each other — without being interrupted. Hannibal takes advantage of this privilege to the fullest, leading them up all those stairs to the highest level of the Florence Duomo where they can see the intricacies of the beautiful painting on the ceiling up close.

And Will really does get lost in the art when Hannibal tilts his face upwards, for better viewing, and presses kisses into Will's exposed neck. Staring at the biblical paintings on the dome ceiling, feeling light-headed from his face being pointed so far up, and falling prey to Hannibal's gentle caresses on his throat, make Will feel like he's in heaven. Or as close to it as his agnostic, sinner soul can get.

"Would you accompany me to the Galleria dell'Accademia today, Will? I'd like to show you Michelangelo's David."

Will smiles and rolls across the bed they share, before getting up and walking over to the bathroom where Hannibal is combing his hair.

"If you wanted to show me a gorgeous naked man, you could just shower with the door open."

Hannibal smirks at him in response, and deliberately doesn't button his shirt all the way to the top.

Ever since arriving in Florence, Will has found flirting to be surprisingly easy, way more effortless than he would've thought. He's never been the type to seduce people with words, not consciously at least. Normally, flirting feels awkward... but it's infinitely *less* awkward than actually talking about things with Hannibal.

There's a lot of things Will wants to talk about with Hannibal. Things that they *should* talk about, such as the fact that he is the FBI's most wanted serial killer and cannibal. Or the fact that he broke Will's mind and framed him for murders he didn't commit, purely because he was curious what would happen. Or the trajectory of Will's becoming, which they were both so invested in before running off to Florence. Or Will sleeping with Margot Verger only a few short weeks after sleeping with Hannibal for the first time. Or how that first time sleeping with Hannibal left them with matching scars and a taste for raw human meat. Or Hannibal manipulating Mason Verger into feeding his own face to Will's dogs, giving them a taste of human meat too. Or even the fact that despite all of these things, Will found himself willingly moving to another continent with Hannibal, uprooting his life and leaving behind everything he knew, even his dogs.

But instead of talking about any of it, Will lets Hannibal drag him to the Galleria dell'Accademia for the eighth time. As usual, Hannibal spends endless hours admiring art, and Will spends endless hours admiring Hannibal admiring art. Although Hannibal's appreciation for the ethereal sculptures seems limitless, he always makes sure to point out that Will is the most stunning work of art in existence. The words put a smile on Will's face every time, and the sickly-sweet romantic compliments quickly turn into *They say we're not allowed to touch the art pieces in the museum, but I'm sure a little contact wouldn't shatter you*, accentuated with a possessive hand grabbing Will's ass.

Regardless of where they end up fucking — in the museum bathroom, in one of the back alleys outside, or even safely in their apartment if both of them manage to keep their hands to themselves for that long — it's always good. Perfect, even.

If such a thing exists.

Florence is like a warm paradise, an escape from those blood-stained, intrigue-filled lives they both had in Baltimore. Will thinks it's like heaven, the end destination after all the pain and suffering, where nothing from your previous life matters. That's certainly how it's been between them ever since the plane touched down in Italy — like nothing from before matters. And it may not matter — but it's there, permanently etched into Will's memory. It's sometimes present in his nightmares, ones bad enough that even the humid and carefree Florentine atmosphere isn't able to stifle completely.

There is a pervasive sense of unease in their new coupling. It's almost undetectable, a tiny undercurrent of tension that they both feel and ignore. Will feels it buzzing under his skin, a slight but constant reminder that this life he's sharing with Hannibal *is* too perfect, too good to be true.

All the mind games, endless facades, and mutual betrayals. They don't talk about any of it. As if starting a new life on a new continent wiped clean their memories, consciences and all the unresolved feelings, the past is never discussed. The kind of people they were in Baltimore — Hannibal who lives to kill, and Will who kills to live — are both now seemingly reduced to two untroubled men, playing house.

It's ridiculous, honestly. They have done so much to each other over the past year. Or more accurately, Hannibal did a lot of unspeakable atrocities to Will, and Will was just starting to repay him when they moved to Florence together. Their night of mutual consumption was life-changing, but it wasn't enough to erase all of the wrath Will feels from Hannibal's betrayals. He supposes that's why he slept with Margot, even after he slept with Hannibal. He wanted to punish Hannibal.

In the back of his mind, Will knew he also went through with the affair with Margot because he was curious. He was curious if his hunger for Hannibal was because he was generally sex-starved, or if he was especially Hannibal-starved. As soon as he slipped between the sheets with someone that wasn't Hannibal, Will understood that it wasn't just general intimacy that he craved. It was undoubtedly intimacy with Hannibal.

It feels like a cycle between them. They betray one another and then they punish one another, and then they betray each other again. That's what Will is used to, that's why he didn't feel incredibly angry with Hannibal for feeding his dogs Mason's flesh. It is a predictable cycle between them, and not even their cosmic night of devouring one another was enough to break it.

It seems like moving to Italy together would be enough to break it, except Will knows that it's not. And that simple fact is what's got him so paranoid.

The weight of all the things they have shared sits heavy on Will's shoulders. When he sleeps, it darkens his dreams and turns them into nightmares.

There's always a hidden agenda behind everything Hannibal does, and Will's mind examines it during sleeping hours because he won't let himself when he's awake. All of Hannibal's charming words and gestures of courtship may be carefully crafted to trick Will into letting his guard down. Taking him to the stunning galleries and making him feel one with the art

undoubtedly is Hannibal's version of wicked foreshadowing, before he makes Will into an art piece of his own, slitting his throat while kissing him under all the otherworldly paintings.

Will dreams that they find him displayed in the main gallery, just like all those other sculptures; dead eyes and skin white like stone, not a single imperfection on his nude body, except for the wound on his upper thigh, which has been ripped open until it doesn't look identical to Hannibal's anymore. A fitting punishment for ever thinking Hannibal Lecter would see him as his equal.

Will wakes up from the nightmare, struggling to breathe, choking on the imaginary blood spilling from the phantom laceration across his throat. He spends the rest of the night awake, not making a single sound in fear of waking Hannibal next to him, lying alone with his thoughts racing and intense paranoia gripping his chest.

It's not Hannibal killing him that's got him so terrified. It's the possibility that Hannibal does not, and will never, see Will as anything other than a pet to be played with. It's the possibility that Hannibal will discard him without warning, without a second thought.

And when the sun rises, Will puts on his mask of the happy, worry-free man. A man *in love*. He wakes Hannibal up with a cup of freshly brewed coffee and a kiss to the corner of his mouth. When Hannibal asks how he slept, a smooth lie rolls from his tongue with ease. It's not the first time Will lies to him, after all.

From the moment they met, their relationship was built on lies. Mostly Hannibal's, though Will is starting to catch up. Neither of them address that rotten foundation yet. They simply keep acting like this life they are sharing is a dream, instead of a rose-colored nightmare.

Intertwining his life with Hannibal means that lies are starting to seep into his conversations with other people too. Specifically, Jack. Will constantly wonders what Jack thinks of their spontaneous decision to move to the other side of the world, especially after Will and Jack devised a detailed plan about getting Hannibal caught.

Jack calls him sometimes, seemingly just to check in, but really to ask about their plan. Will has no choice but to assure him that he hasn't changed allegiances, and that this is all part of the big scheme to ensure Hannibal's downfall. He conjures up lies about how he is simply playing along to earn Hannibal's trust, wrapping him around his little finger, while collecting

evidence for Jack. A made-up story that's really just a desperate attempt to feel in control of his life. Because ironically, it's Will who feels like the one being tricked and deceived.

Still, Will doesn't regret leaving everything behind to come here with Hannibal. They gave themselves to each other back in Hannibal's office all those weeks ago, and Will doesn't regret it. He just wishes they could push through this mutually unspoken pact to ignore the worst in each other in order to enjoy the best.

Will wants all of Hannibal, the best and the worst. In order to have that, he needs to give the same. They actually need to talk about all the things hanging over them. They need to talk about the past and the future, because Will cares about both. He needs to know how Hannibal sees him.

Will also needs to see Hannibal completely. He wants to witness what he's like when he's killing someone, and share that pleasure. He remembers watching Hannibal's cool air of pure control as Mason Verger skinned his own face and ate his nose. He felt a rush from watching Hannibal then, and it only intensified when he snapped Mason's neck. Will wishes he could see Hannibal snap someone's neck and actually kill them, this time.

The possibility is always in the back of his mind, especially when he thinks about his half-baked becoming. Will's desire for this, and for a clear relationship between them, is only hampered by his constant paranoia that Hannibal does not feel the same and is only playing with Will before he inevitably kills him.

Possibly the worst thing about their playing house is that Will knows Hannibal also feels the charged undercurrent, but is doing nothing about it. Will can't decide if that's because he's biding his time, waiting for Will to fully trust him before stabbing him in the back — or anywhere else really — or because he's simply too smug about Will's growing paranoia to rectify it. It's likely that it's both options, which is infuriating.

They are in Florence about a month before Will decides he can't take their domestic pretend-play anymore.

Let us know what you think! Excited for more?

This chapter was really to establish what's going on when the story starts. Next chapter all the fun plot will really take off!!

Follow [us](#) on [twitter](#) for sneak peeks ~

Ristretto

Chapter Notes

We are back with chapter two! This one has Hannibal's POV of their time in Florence, as well as some manipulative Murder Husbands ;)

Hope y'all enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Hannibal loves Florence.

The old city streets, the beautiful architecture, and of course the classic art that is now readily available to him at all times as a member of the Palazzo. It is just as majestic as he remembers it being in his youth, and just as exciting. Perhaps now, that excitement results from a different source, though.

Having Will in Florence with him is one of Hannibal's deepest desires come true. He thought about it, back in Baltimore. The possibility flitted through his mind like the option of a rather heavy dessert; it may not be good for him, but he craved it regardless.

Hannibal has always wanted someone to see him, see him for who he really is beneath his person-suit. His suit is tailored for self-preservation, but it is lonely. When he met Will and learned about his unique ability to think like a killer, he knew that Will had the right kind of eyes to see Hannibal.

He is still sure that Will has the right kind of eyes, but he's not sure if Will sees him yet the way Hannibal hopes. He isn't sure if Will *wants* to see him for what he is. Ever since the BSHCI, since realizing he's a participant in Hannibal's manipulation games, Will has been careful not to reveal all of his motivations. He's donned a person-suit of his own.

Hannibal thought their night of mutual cannibalism, *mutual consumption*, was a genuine bonding experience. But clearly, Will did not want to be bound. Not even two weeks later, Hannibal found out that Will had slept with one of his patients, Margot Verger. As if him and Hannibal devouring each other in every sense of the word, and having matching scars to prove it, means nothing at all.

Perhaps, it is Hannibal's own fault for assuming that their night together meant that they were exclusive. He just didn't think that it would be characteristic of Will to be promiscuous and take Margot into his bed after she showed up on his doorstep. Then again, doing out of character things had been exactly how Will had been behaving; eating Hannibal's flesh straight from his body, killing Freddie Lounds, and pulling the trigger on Clark Ingram. Hannibal has never been able to entirely predict Will.

Hannibal deduced that all of this was done deliberately to surprise him, so he decided to surprise Will in his own way. And Hannibal's surprises are never pleasant ones.

It was satisfying to see the shock and disgust in Will's expression when he found Mason Verger in his house, feeding his face to Will's dogs. It perfectly mirrored the disgust Hannibal felt when he learned about Will's affair with Margot. It was a fitting punishment, but it wasn't enough. Hannibal still found himself hurt and confused about Will's actions and motivations.

He was surprised, not entirely pleasantly, when Will accepted his proposition to move to Florence with him. It seemed too good to be true; and in Hannibal's experience, it usually is.

Hannibal wants to be seen for what he is, but he also wants to be seen as someone worthy of romantic partnership. Will is the only person he feels like he can have that with — but not when he sleeps around, refusing to be bound. Hannibal wants to own Will completely, because Will owns him. It took Hannibal a while to admit, but it is the truth.

His heart beats for Will, his body aches for him, and his soul craves the deep connection he has with this man. That was one reason why he asked Will to move to Florence. Hannibal needs to know if Will is still drawn to him without the climate of killers, the FBI, and ambiguous morality surrounding him. If Will wants Hannibal for who he is as a person, or purely for his violence-stained lifestyle. Or perhaps, if Will is only doing this as part of some convoluted revenge plan.

Now, in Florence, Hannibal finds himself preoccupied with Will's intentions. They are not hiding their movements from the authorities and Will has done nothing to warrant suspicion, but Hannibal is still on guard. He considers the possibility that Will is conspiring with Jack to somehow arrest him on foreign soil, citing as evidence Will's passionate accusations against Hannibal during his stay at the BSHCI. Jack must suspect him, and Will must somehow be involved, although Hannibal hopes against all reason that it is not true.

He hopes that their shared night of devouring each other was enough to diminish Will's animosity towards him. It seemed to be enough to persuade Will to run off to Europe with him, but Hannibal is not convinced that it was enough to halt his plans to catch Hannibal. He is paranoid and hopeful at the same time, and needs answers. Only, he will not risk Will lying to him. He will instead collect evidence on his own.

Hannibal decides to test Will. He needs to determine if Will is worthy of being his partner in crime and in life, and if Will desires it as much as Hannibal does.

An opportunity for such a test presents itself the next day, when they visit the fresh produce market. Hannibal is carrying baskets full of lavish fruits and vegetables that they just bought, when some careless person bumps into him, scattering the food all over the ground.

"Watch where you're going!" the man yells at them.

Hannibal wants to object that it wasn't him who's at fault, but decides to gauge Will's reaction first. He turns his head and finds Will looking at him expectantly, mirroring his own actions.

"*Ciechi stupidi Americani,*" the man mumbles, shoving them both aside harshly and stomping away.

Hannibal lets out a displeased sigh and crouches down to pick up the spilled fruits and vegetables. Once he's refilled the baskets, he notices that Will is still looking at him expectantly. Hannibal looks back at him, eyebrows raised slightly, inviting his partner to elaborate.

“So, what are you going to do about it?” Will asks.

“About what?”

“About *him*,” Will says, annoyed. “He was so rude to you.”

“What’s to be done about that?” Hannibal asks nonchalantly in return.

He knows exactly what’s on Will’s mind. Will let himself be dragged into this romantic waltz between them knowing that he is dancing with a killer. Which is exactly why he entered the dancefloor, to glide through people like a blade, painting everything red as he twirls around. Oh, Will is itching to waltz, like an assassin’s finger itches for the trigger. But he won’t be the one to propose; he wants Hannibal to ask *him* for a dance, to lead him as the more experienced counterpart and show him the right steps.

As much as Hannibal loves to dance, he isn’t going to give Will the satisfaction. Not just yet. For the waltz to unfold smoothly, one needs to fully trust their partner.

For Hannibal, trust isn’t something to dive into headfirst. Not unless he’s tested and re-tested it a thousand times. So in his usual style, Hannibal takes the fiasco at the market and manipulates it to serve his specific agenda. Since Will has been behaving in all kinds of unpredictable ways, Hannibal is going to act just as unpredictably.

Will is suddenly lost for words, now that Hannibal is so obviously pretending like he doesn’t understand what he’s implying.

“You know. Add him to your rolodex”, he huffs.

“I didn't bring the rolodex with me to Florence, Will.”

Hannibal flashes him an unintelligible smile, designed to further confuse his beloved. It clearly works, as Will shrugs awkwardly and drops the subject. They effortlessly sink back into their safe and familiar spectacle of two men in love.

Later in the afternoon, Hannibal does ask Will to dance. There's a sensual serenade played by a street busker coming through an open window. They start moving their bodies in unison around their cosy kitchen, Hannibal's hands on Will's waist, and Will's arms on Hannibal's shoulders. An innocent little waltz like this is all Hannibal can allow for now.

The opera has always been something Hannibal enjoys, but having Will join him elevates his enjoyment to the level of elation. The Florence Opera House, with its gilded and intricately carved walls, has that old-world atmosphere that Hannibal adores. It took some cajoling to convince Will to accompany him, but he can tell his lover likes coming to the Opera.

Once Hannibal attended a show with Will, he knew he no longer wanted to attend without him. Will looks utterly divine in his custom-made, tailored suits that Hannibal picks out for him. He wears a different one every time they attend, but tonight's may just be Hannibal's favorite. It is midnight blue, and makes Will's eyes sparkle beautifully.

The Opera is frequented by many of Hannibal's colleagues at the Palazzo Capponi, and tonight there are even more of his acquaintances in attendance because of the play being performed. Faust is just the type of opera for Florentine academics, and just the type of opera for Hannibal and Will.

He spends the first part of the play keeping dual attention on the remarkable performance and Will's entrancing reactions to it. He knows Will previously knew of Faust, but he had never seen it on the stage before. In Hannibal's experience, there is a large difference between knowing something exists and seeing it first-hand.

Indeed, Will illustrates this principle well. Hannibal watches him, leaned forward, eyes focused on the story unfolding before him. He can tell his lover is analyzing the moral themes of the opera by the way his eyebrows rise and fall during important moments. Hannibal can't wait to hear Will's thoughts about his favorite play during the intermission.

That is, if Hannibal can restrain from taking Will in the restroom. It's a very tempting alternative.

When the curtain falls for intermission, Will stands up and claps alongside Hannibal. He comes back to himself after that, and looks at Hannibal with fondness.

"You're right," he says as they make their way from their seats into the bar area. "It is different seeing it right in front of you."

Hannibal hums and leans down to brush a kiss on Will's cheek. "I thought you might like it."

Will catches his hand in a squeeze and laughs at the same time. "I'll go get us some drinks."

Hannibal nods and his eyes follow Will through the crowd, catching sight of his colleagues from the Palazzo clustered around the bar. Hannibal considers them but keeps his distance, well aware that Will would rather not socialize with others. He would do it to maintain appearances, but Hannibal wants tonight to be special between them. A respite from the cloud of unspoken paranoia following them both.

"I fully expected Faust to capture your interest, and I'm pleased to see I wasn't wrong," a familiar voice purrs behind him.

Hannibal turns to meet Antony Dimmond's gaze, one of the current guest lecturers at the Palazzo. The man took an interest in Hannibal since he started working there. The kind of interest that manifests in hungry stares, coquettish small talk and violations of personal space whenever possible. Hannibal is amused by this interest so he allows it to happen, though without reciprocating.

"Indeed, Mr. Dimmond. Are you enjoying the performance?"

“Immensely,” Antony grins, taking a sip of his drink and continuing to leer at Hannibal.

Hannibal grins back until his attention is shifted by Will’s reappearance beside him with two glasses of dark red wine.

“I hope this is adequate for your tastes, sweetheart”, Will says after shooting a glare at Antony.

Hannibal smiles and takes a sip from his glass. “Perfectly adequate, Will, thank you.”

Will nods stiffly at Antony before wrapping a possessive arm around Hannibal and pulling him to an unoccupied and rather hidden corner of the room. Hannibal raises an eyebrow, amused at Will’s obvious jealousy, and waits for his beloved to do something. Hannibal suspects he is equally likely to scold Hannibal as he is to kiss him in a public display of ownership, and Hannibal very much looks forward to seeing which it is.

However, Will does neither of those things and instead takes a poised sip of his wine. Hannibal slides his arm around Will to calm his lover’s jealousy, then his ears perk up at the sound of a distinctly vitriolic voice.

“I don’t like him, or his Italian,” Professor Sogliato says somewhere close. “ *Dottore* Lecter should not hold the position he does, *signors* . It is an insult to our institution.”

Hannibal feels Will’s gaze burn into him and he meets his eyes. “He’s being *rude*, Hannibal.”

“He certainly is,” Hannibal muses. “What’s to be done about that?”

Will keeps looking at him, an intent stare over the rim of the wine glass against his lips. Everything about his body language screams at Hannibal to accept the challenge. Hannibal tilts his head to the side and appraises the situation.

Will's behavior can't be called anything but manipulative. He must have overheard Sogliato's moaning as he collected their drinks. Perhaps he was going to ignore his insults or perhaps not, but once he returned to find Hannibal chatting with another man, Will's hot jealousy decided for him.

Hannibal can tell this is another test to see if he would respond in his usual way when faced with *rudeness*. Though, this time the test is more deliberately orchestrated, unlike the incident with the ill-mannered man at the vegetable market. Part of Hannibal is proud of Will for being so wonderfully manipulative, but another part is annoyed that these tactics are directed at him. Conscious of Will's hungry stare and feeling slight irritation at his beloved, Hannibal drifts over to where his colleagues are gathered.

"Pardon *signors* ," Hannibal greets. "I overheard my name and thought I might be needed."

Most of the men splutter but Professor Sogliato holds his head high. "I was just explaining that you may not be the best candidate for your position, *dottore* . No offense intended, but you are not as talented in Italian as you think you are."

Hannibal says nothing and stares Professor Sogliato down until he coughs and turns back to the bar for another drink. Only then, when he's begun walking away, does Hannibal speak.

"Allegro mi sembrava Amor tenendo, meo core in mano, e ne le braccia avea, madonna involta in un drappo dormendo. Poi la svegliava, e d'esto core ardendo, lei paventosa umilmente pascea; appresso gir lo ne vedea piangendo."

Sogliato turns back to him with a stony expression and Hannibal grins. "Dante's first sonnet. The eating of the heart is a powerful image."

The rest of the men break out into smiles and soft applause, and Sogliato tilts his head before escaping to the bar. Hannibal turns back to Will, who is watching him with a displeased expression.

"My appreciation for bringing that to my attention, dear Will. I find that in the place of other means, correcting rudeness with veiled mockery is quite poetic."

Will just huffs at him and drinks his wine. They spend the rest of intermission exchanging honeyed words, exactly like an established couple on a date to the opera should behave. But Hannibal can feel that their romantic evening out has taken a sour turn. Will has noticed too, judging by the fact that his hand doesn't spend as much time resting on Hannibal's thigh as it did during the first act. Hannibal decides that he does not like his lover pushing him in this way.

He may just have to push back.

Chapter End Notes

What did you think? Ready for more?

Ciechi stupidi Americani means "Blind, stupid Americans".

Macchiato

Chapter Summary

“We’ve been here for weeks and I’m fucking sick of playing house!” Will growls, throwing his hands in the air.

“Do I have to regularly murder people to keep you interested in me, Will? Is that all I am to you — entertainment?”

Chapter Notes

Things are starting to get interesting in this chapter. Let us know what you think!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will knows it when he sees it.

The hostile attitude and snide remarks coming from a waiter at the cafe Will frequents, aimed at the gay couple who made the mistake of holding hands across the table. He observes. He remembers. And the next day, he brings Hannibal to this same cafe.

Will guides them to the same table the two gentlemen sat at the day prior, perhaps subconsciously expecting a similar kind of spectacle, but this time with himself and Hannibal substituted in. And Will delves right into his role. He holds Hannibal’s hand across the table, reaches across to fix his blond hair where it’s been messed up by his sunglasses, nudges his knee with his own. Making sure the homophobic waiter sees it all.

Will can practically feel the heat of the blood boiling inside the man’s skull. The waiter doesn’t even try to hide it. He barks out a blunt greeting from behind his gritted teeth and takes their orders, not only refusing to smile, but shooting daggers at them with his eyes. Incredibly rude. Hannibal notices the angry stares and passive-aggressive language, but keeps acting unbothered, polite even. Clearly, a lot more is needed to provoke him. So Will takes his game to the next level.

When he sees the man approaching with their croissants and coffee, Will reaches across the table and presses his lips on Hannibal's. It is definitely the most prominent public display of affection he's ever done, and even Hannibal is taken aback a little. Though, the extent of his surprised reaction is nothing compared to the waiter's.

The man leans over to pour the coffee into Will's cup and by accident - a totally *deliberate* accident - spills the hot beverage onto Will's lap. Will yelps in shock and jumps up to his feet, narrowly avoiding elbowing the waiter in the gut. Truly a shame that it was avoided. His thighs tingle from the burn, the pain especially prominent in the almost fully healed wound on his leg. The one Hannibal gave him during their night of mutual consumption back in Baltimore.

The man apologises for his clumsiness, but from his satisfied smile it is very evident that no part of this was unintentional. Hannibal looks at him with an unimpressed expression, eyes narrow and calculating, hopefully planning out what meal he is going to make out of this arrogant asshole.

"He *burned* me. On purpose," Will hisses once the man is gone.

"Unacceptable," Hannibal agrees.

"There is no way we can let him get away with this."

Hannibal appraises him with his eyes, considering every meaning behind Will's words. Then he gives Will a slow nod in agreement. Finally. *Finally*.

"Absolutely. We should speak with the owner and demand a refund."

Will deflates like a punctured balloon. He set the stage, arranged the spectacle and even got hurt during the culmination. All of it, just for Hannibal to pretend to be unbothered once again? Will wants to scream from all the built up expectation and subsequent frustration.

Hannibal is playing games with him, but Will doesn't seem to be able to figure out why. What is Hannibal up to?

Will thinks about it the entire time they walk back to the apartment, only realising where they are when Hannibal unlocks the door to let them in. He belatedly figures out that they had to come back here, since he desperately needs to change out of his coffee-stained pants. As he sheds them, Will realises that he desperately needs to discard the mask of a completely normal man living in domestic bliss with his completely normal lover. And he wants to rip that mask off Hannibal's face too.

"He fucking burned me, Hannibal," he confronts the other man as he steps out of the bedroom.

"You provoked him," Hannibal responds nonchalantly. He's sharpening some of his drawing pencils, unbothered by the challenge in Will's tone.

"With my sexual orientation?" Will scoffs in disbelief.

"With deliberate actions that you knew would get a rise out of him." Hannibal finally looks at Will, his facade of indifference suddenly switching to rapidly-growing annoyance. "Do you really want to kill him so badly?"

"It's not that —"

"Go do it then," Hannibal challenges. He's fully facing Will now, looking right at him with his piercing eyes, studying him with that infuriatingly curious gaze. "You know I would love to see your true self come out to play."

Will narrows his eyes. "That's not what I meant."

"Oh. Let me rephrase. You want me to kill him so badly," Hannibal continues, mockery dripping from his voice. "You want me to kill somebody, anybody, it doesn't matter who, to

the point where you make schemes to provoke me.”

Will is hit with a wave of frustration for being seen so easily. The words he’s been holding back out of spite, the ones he’s turned into what now feels like silly provocation attempts, rush out all at once.

“We’ve been here for weeks and I’m fucking sick of playing house!” Will growls, throwing his hands in the air.

“Do I have to regularly *murder people* to keep you interested in me, Will? Is that all I am to you — entertainment?”

Will opens his mouth to object, but the look Hannibal gives him drains all the air from his lungs. It’s not the vicious, bloodthirsty and unforgiving kind of look that he expected to see during their first real argument. It’s something worse. Something Will hoped to never have to see. There is a genuine look of anguish and heartache in Hannibal’s eyes.

“You want to partake in violence but don’t want to be the main executioner. I am growing tired of your pitiful struggles with morality, Will. You’re just using me to justify your own hunger,” Hannibal concludes bitterly when Will doesn’t respond.

Hearing Hannibal say the words with such hurt makes Will’s heart ache too. The rational part of his brain is screaming at him not to fall for these tricks. Emotional manipulation. Using Will’s warped morality crisis against him. Playing the victim. All the things Hannibal does best. But Will can’t look away from the honesty in Hannibal’s pained eyes.

“Stop with the emotional manipulation bullshit. I’m not the bad guy here,” Will says, not bothering to hide or limit his annoyance.

“You’re certainly acting like one, Will. Do you even feel anything for me, or do you simply enjoy stringing me along as your hitman, of sorts?”

Intentionally or not, Hannibal has located Will's sore spot, and he's hitting it hard. Will feels the impact of the words like physical punches, even though they haven't touched at all during the entire exchange. There is no way a remorseless man like Hannibal isn't guilt tripping him on purpose.

Unless it's just paranoia, and Will is really upsetting his lover with his actions. He doesn't find it in himself to push further to find out. Despite all the times Hannibal has broken him, he doesn't want to break Hannibal back.

"My feelings for you are genuine," he admits, all his frustration from a few moments ago leaving him now with one heavy exhale.

"Then prove it. You know I'd kill for you, without hesitation. But would you kill for me?"

Will stays silent. He doesn't want to argue anymore, doesn't want to cause hurt or get hurt anymore. Will doesn't want to argue, he wants to *talk*.

"I killed Freddie Lounds for you," he replies, desperately hoping it doesn't sound like a question.

He is scared that Hannibal knows, or will know, that he lied about Freddie Lounds. If Hannibal learns about the deception, that Freddie's death was staged by Will and the FBI, Will predicts Hannibal would kill him — or worse, leave him. Those potential consequences are what's making Will so paranoid.

Will doesn't want to lie anymore either. The guilt he feels now from doing so to Hannibal feels like betrayal, although whether a betrayal to his lover or to himself, Will cannot say.

"Was it really for me?" Hannibal wonders.

Will can't say anything, chest suddenly feeling tight, so he turns around to walk back into their bedroom and slams the door.

That night, Will falls asleep early and alone while Hannibal stays in the living room, sketching furiously and not looking up from the paper in front of him for hours. Will is grateful for the rest, relieved that he doesn't have to keep stewing in his mess of emotions, until his dreams turn morbid. He's been unsettled by the recent nightmares about Hannibal killing, disowning, and leaving him, but he's come to expect them. The nightmare tonight is horrifying because it's entirely unexpected.

Will finds himself in the living room of their apartment in Florence, the fireplace emitting a warm glow but doing nothing to diminish the chill in Will's bones. He tries to stand up from his usual armchair to get closer, but finds himself unable to move. He looks down in confusion and gasps, seeing his limbs bound to the chair's legs with great amounts of long, red, curly hair. Will feels his own hair stand up on the back of his neck and before he can scream, a face appears out of the darkness to gloat at him.

"You thought you could make a deal with me to fake my death, then run off like it was nothing?" Freddie smiles. "I want what I was owed, Graham. I want the Ripper."

Will shakes his head vigorously, tries to shout *No, no you can't have him!* but discovers his mouth sewn shut.

"You've done too much speaking," a smooth, low voice whispers in his ear. Will inhales sharply, eyes wide as he watches Hannibal glide around him to stand next to Freddie.

No! He yells internally. *She'll tell Jack! Hannibal, you have to kill her!*

All that comes out are muted screams that dream Freddie and dream Hannibal ignore. Will is filled with so much fear for Hannibal that he doesn't notice both of them holding knives until the two blades are stuck deep inside his chest, cutting up his insides.

Will moans in agony and feels the pain, sharp and potent, in his entire body. He looks up to find Hannibal's eyes locked on him, full of amusement, before he feels another terrible pain in his thigh. His head sags down to see Hannibal burning his shared scar with a poker from the nearby fire, and his eyes fill with tears.

“You are not worthy of this,” Hannibal says softly. “You never were.”

Will sobs as best as he can with his closed mouth, and suddenly the white-hot pain in his chest returns. Freddie leans over him, her blade sunk into Will’s chest and sawing through flesh and bone like slicing bread. She makes quick work, and the next moment lowers her hand into the gaping hole in Will’s chest to pull out his still-beating heart.

“Thank you, Graham. I now have what I was owed,” she grins, holding Will’s heart. “I have the Ripper.”

Will stops struggling against the restraints of Freddie’s hair and watches in anguish as Hannibal turns his back on him, right as Freddie Lounds lunges forward to slice Will’s throat.

He wakes up gasping, and he wakes up alone.

It looks like Hannibal never came to bed, and the apartment feels frighteningly quiet apart from Will’s rapid breathing. The leftover anguish from dreaming about Hannibal disowning him was almost gone before, but now it’s back, constricting his chest. Will scrambles onto his feet and stumbles into the living room, looking around frantically for any reassurance that Hannibal hasn’t left him.

When Will finally spots Hannibal sitting on the balcony, immersed in a book, he feels immediate relief. For the first time since his nightmare began, he feels that his heart is safely back in its place where it belongs.

Hannibal is angry with Will. For several reasons.

Firstly, he is still infuriated about Will sleeping with Margot. It's the kind of undignified and unfaithful behaviour that Hannibal cannot tolerate. Never mind the fact he and Will never agreed to be exclusive — it hurts his pride regardless. It hurts his heart too.

Secondly, Hannibal has had enough of Will's constant attempts to provoke him into killing someone. Hannibal doesn't like to be provoked. It's time he gives Will a taste of his own medicine. Provoke him into action.

So it's only a matter of time before Hannibal orchestrates a sequence of events that would let him channel all of his anger and test Will's loyalty. While Will's tests for him are child's play, Hannibal's test for Will involves the highest possible stakes — because that's the only kind of game Hannibal plays.

Antony Dimmond is blinded by his infatuation towards Hannibal, and therefore the perfect tool for what Hannibal has in mind. When the man visits the exhibition of ancient torture instruments that Hannibal is hosting at the Palazzo, all it takes is a few flirtatious glances and well thought-out sexual innuendos relating to said torture instruments, before Antony accepts the invitation to *help him untwist to their mutual benefit* at Hannibal's place.

Hannibal ushers his new friend into the apartment he shares with Will. He's timing this just right so Will is currently at the market, but will be back soon. The stage has been set for Hannibal's test, and he can't wait to see how Will is going to perform.

Antony politely surveys the ornate apartment but seems more focused on Hannibal. Ever since Hannibal started working at the Palazzo, Antony has been undressing him with his eyes every day. He is doing the same now, licking his lips with anticipation, knowing that soon he will be undressing him for real. Hannibal tilts his head at him and smirks. He's going to enjoy this immensely.

“Something you want?” Hannibal says, mockingly polite.

Antony grins back and slithers up to place his hands on Hannibal's chest. “Just you.”

Hannibal doesn't speak but gives Antony a wink and gently takes his hands off his chest. He beckons Antony to follow him and leads his guest across the small apartment into the master bedroom, ignoring the jolt of uncharacteristic *wrongness* he feels and focusing instead on the rush of power and anticipation of what's surely to come.

He purposefully leaves the bedroom door ajar and wastes no time pushing Antony on the bed. His partner goes down enthusiastically, grabbing Hannibal's shirt with his hands again and tugging to bring their faces closer together. Hannibal realizes a split-second before it happens that Antony is angling for a kiss, and quickly tilts his face away to mouth at the younger man's neck instead.

Some acts are sacred, to be shared only between himself and Will.

Will. As Hannibal thinks of him again, his heart races and he gropes Antony with excitement. He's doing this for Will, and he cannot wait to see his reaction. Like most things Hannibal does, this act of taking another man into their bed is calculated and intended to obtain a specific result. There is a result Hannibal wants, and there is a result Hannibal fears. As he can never entirely predict Will, Hannibal is looking forward to finding out which outcome he's going to obtain.

Hannibal makes quick work of Antony's clothing and continues his ministrations on the man's eager body. Antony is speaking but Hannibal is not paying attention - he can focus only on going through the motions of sex, timing the preparation just right so that Will returns exactly when Hannibal wants him to.

Hannibal has two slicked-up fingers inside Antony when he hears the front door open and smiles. Antony smiles back at him in ignorance through his pants and groans, and Hannibal smiles wider knowing that Will can hear his sounds of pleasure.

As predicted, there is a furious stomping of feet before the open bedroom door is slammed into the wall with a BANG.

Both men turn their heads simultaneously towards the noise. Will is standing in the doorway, eyes black with rage and his whole body twitching with tension, as if he's a bomb about to explode. Hannibal's face reflects twenty hues of expectant curiosity. Antony's face is twenty hues of a different kind of curiosity altogether.

“Oh, we have company,” Antony breaks the silence and turns to Hannibal, raising an eyebrow, “I didn’t know it was going to be *that kind of party*. But regardless, count me in.”

And that is when the bomb explodes.

Chapter End Notes

We all love a good cliff hanger don’t we? ;)

Freddo

Chapter Summary

Will leaps onto the bed and roughly shoving Hannibal off Antony, sending Hannibal to the floor and allowing Will to straddle Antony in his stead. Antony gasps at the impact of being pinned down by the weight of Will's body, but there isn't a hint of fear on his face. He licks his lips and looks up at Will smugly.

"Oh, you like it rough, don't you?"

Chapter Notes

Will goes feral :)

and the chapter title is there for a reason....

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

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"Oh, you like it rough, don't you?"

Will's response is simple, sharp, and impossible to misinterpret. His fist collides with the side of Antony's face with a loud crack, blood immediately coating his knuckles. The man underneath him yelps and his eyes widen as he realizes that perhaps, this is not the kind of party he thought it was.

From his position on the floor, Hannibal watches Will utter something along the lines of *shut the fuck up* from behind his gritted teeth and withdraw the knife he's been hiding in his

pocket. Antony's pupils dilate even further and he starts to frantically try to push Will off of him, kicking and hitting with every limb like his life depends on it.

Oh, how wrong poor Antony is.

In this moment, his life depends on Will, and Will only. Hannibal is intrigued to see what Will is going to do with this power that he has over his victim.

Is he going to kill for Hannibal, like Hannibal asked him to?

Hannibal remembers purposefully taunting Will by asking if his feelings for him are genuine. Remembers Will looking sincerely hurt and upset at the question. Hannibal knows he's about to witness the truth of Will's feelings, whatever they may be.

He watches with hungry eyes as Will uses his body weight to keep Antony from struggling and slashes his throat in one hard, furious motion.

Blood sprays everywhere, coating Will and splashing Hannibal where he rests on the floor. Will doesn't stop there, and keeps a tight grip on the wet knife as he stabs Antony over, and over, and over again.

The blood on Hannibal's lips tastes like the sweetest, most intoxicating wine when he licks them, his mouth suddenly dry. His breath comes out in pants and he can't look away from Will still viciously stabbing Antony's warm corpse.

After what feels like an eternity, Will stops. He sets the knife down and pushes Antony's body off the bed. It makes a loud thump when landing on the floor, breaking the silence that suddenly encompasses the room. Will then turns towards Hannibal, their eyes interlocking.

"You look magnificent, darl-"

Hannibal's hushed words are cut short when Will grabs him by the throat, hauls him up, and throws him onto the bed. The blood-soaked sheets cling to Hannibal's back as he's pressed down by the weight of Will straddling his hips.

Hannibal's breath leaves him for the second time in recent minutes, squeezed out of him by Will's hand tightening around his throat. His cock is achingly hard, more arousal swirling in his body now, at the sight of Will's possessive violence, than there was when caressing Antony. Will is breathing hard, chest heaving like he's run a marathon, but muscles tight with fury as he holds the bloody knife against the sliver of Hannibal's neck that isn't covered by Will's hand.

"If you cheat on me again I'll fucking kill you." His voice is dangerously low and makes Hannibal shiver.

"Likewise," Hannibal manages to wheeze.

"*Good.*"

And there it is, Hannibal thinks. The long overdue conversation about agreeing to an exclusive relationship. Or as close to such a conversation as they were ever going to get. He smiles, which only seems to anger Will more.

Will throws the knife away and wraps both hands around Hannibal's neck with a growl.

"I am so fucking done with your manipulations," Will spits out. "You did this just to make me react this way."

Hannibal grins and lets Will cut off his oxygen instead of easily throwing him off. Their eyes lock for one long moment before something passes between them and Will releases Hannibal's neck. Hannibal takes a deep breath, feels the bruising on his skin, and hopes it turns into vivid marks that stay for days.

They are both still covered in blood, the sight of Will drenched in crimson making Hannibal's mouth water. He reaches for Will but freezes under the sharp glare from his lover.

"No. Don't move. You're not going to do anything except lay there, and take what I give you."

Hannibal's smile is all teeth and he obeys, watching as Will rips both their clothes off, snarling.

"I should have killed him the moment I saw him at the opera," Will snaps. "Nobody is allowed to touch you. Only me."

Will flips Hannibal onto his stomach roughly, pulls him up to his hands and knees, and sticks two fingers inside him, hands still slick with blood. Hannibal grunts at the rough sensation but complies with Will's order and does not move.

"I will kill anyone who touches you. *Everyone* who touches you," he vows, teeth scraping Hannibal's nape.

Hannibal groans, mind filled with brilliant images of Will covered in blood just like he is now, standing over piles of corpses he created for Hannibal. He longs for it, for the clear meaning of Will wanting him just as badly as Hannibal wants him. Hannibal turns his head to glance at Antony's body and groans again, louder, feeling pleasure from witnessing Will's possessiveness.

It calms the paranoia inside him, the insecurity that Will is playing him. He may very well still be, but he is not faking this desperate, territorial want. Will has just viciously killed a man for daring to touch what is his by right. Hannibal relishes in the burn he feels both from Will's fingers and from being desired so entirely.

Will bites into Hannibal's shoulder, hard, and Hannibal can't stop himself from arching into the pain with a gasp. It's another mark that will stay for days, a reminder in addition to their thigh wounds that proclaim who they both belong to.

“Will,” Hannibal says, suddenly out of breath.

Will growls and removes his fingers roughly, latching back onto Hannibal’s throat with one hand as his other hand guides his cock inside. He doesn’t go slow, and Hannibal is glad he doesn’t. He pushes in fully, and when he bottoms out they both gasp together. It isn’t the first time Will has been inside Hannibal, but this time is different. This time they are both shaking.

The intrusion is harsh and painful, but feels right, like Hannibal’s earned this. And he has. He’s wanted Will like this for forever, and finally, he is getting the raw, unrestrained fervour he’s been hoping for.

Hannibal fists his hands in the bloody sheets to prevent himself from rocking back. He wants Will to move, he wants Will to fuck him so hard that he carves a space for himself inside that will never disappear. He wants Will to own him, to show Hannibal how much he aches for him alone.

“*Will*,” he chokes out with difficulty, Will’s hand tight around his neck. Hannibal Lecter has never begged for anything in his life, but he thinks he might be okay with starting now.

Mercifully, Will does not demand that of him.

“Shut *up*,” he hisses, and starts to move.

Hannibal’s jaw goes slack at the feeling of Will fucking into him. It’s brutal, and pain-infused pleasure zings up Hannibal’s spine with every fast, hard thrust. He loves it. He always loves it, but this time it’s so much better because of what Will’s harsh treatment *means*.

Being the recipient — the sole recipient — of Will’s unhinged and destructive passion, holding nothing back, feels more intimate than anything they’ve ever done before. If tasting the meat off each other’s bodies was the beginning of their bonding, this is in the final stages. It’s unbreakable. Irreversible.

Will leans down, covering Hannibal's entire back and sliding his hand around so that he squeezes the front of his throat tighter. Hannibal's head is tingling and little white fireworks are erupting in his field of vision. He can't breathe, or think, or move.

He can only feel.

Feel the rhythmic pounding of their bodies against each other, feel the sharp pull of teeth as Will bites more bruises into his shoulders, feel himself become fluid and mould into whatever Will wants him to be. Hannibal moans so Will can feel the vibrations against his palm, earning him stuttering hips and a gasp.

"Fuck, you feel so good. And you're mine, *all mine*," Will grunts, shoving into Hannibal at this new angle that rubs directly against his prostate.

Hannibal's eyes roll back at the onslaught of praise and pleasure. His lungs are burning at this point, the lack of air making his vision swim, but Hannibal wouldn't change a thing. He whines, wanting to tell Will that they belong to each other, tell him that nobody else matters, tell him that he's close.

"I know," Will whispers in his ear hotly. "I know everything you want to say. But you're going to *stay quiet*."

Will brings his free hand around to jerk Hannibal's cock and thrusts against his prostate one more time before Hannibal spills onto the blood-stained sheets. He feels Will's hips stutter violently a few final times, then feels his warm release coating him on the inside.

Will pulls out and throws Hannibal against the bed in one easy motion, Hannibal's legs giving out and conveniently aiding the process. He groans into the dirty sheets, his entire body bruised. The ache is all-encompassing, from the buzzing in his head from the lack of oxygen to the tingling in his toes due to the fierce climax. Everything hurts, but in a good way, allowing him to relish in the feeling of Will's possessiveness.

His vision stays black for a while, adding to the illusion that he's floating in that sweet overlap between immense euphoria and manic agony. All his senses are so overwhelmed that he doesn't register Will getting up from the bed. He hears Will clean up in the bathroom and then a wet rag is thrown on the pillow next to his head.

"Clean yourself up. And this entire mess," Will spits out, clearly referring to the red-stained room and the body on the floor. "I'm going out for dinner. Don't wait up."

Will has never done anything as utterly sadistic and violent as what just happened in the apartment. It'd been more brutal than breaking Randall Tier's neck with his bare hands. More cruel than deciding to shoot Clark Ingram, who knelt in front of him in surrender. Ruthlessly stabbing a man in his own bedroom one, two, three, *ten* times and then proceeding to choke-fuck his lover, while consumed by his overpowering urge to destroy, mutilate and slaughter, has been inarguably the worst thing Will has ever done.

He's still seeing red, his entire body burning with adrenaline as he stalks down a street without any particular direction. Hannibal tried to *cheat* on him — the only motivation being to force Will to assert how much Hannibal is his, and he is Hannibal's — but it was cheating regardless. They belong to each other, they always have, and Will shouldn't have been made to kill in order to prove it. This was just another of Hannibal's manipulations to draw the innate bloodlusting monster out of Will, once again.

Except, this time, after experiencing the fury caused by his lover's unfaithfulness first-hand, Will can understand things from Hannibal's perspective. He can understand the rage and hurt Hannibal felt when Will slept with Margot, and why he proceeded to make Will watch his dogs eat Mason's face. A punishment for Will's infidelity, as if Will didn't already regret it. He regretted it from the moment he felt Margot's fingers brush against his hand for the first time, and didn't pull away.

At the time, Will thought it would be the perfect way to get back at Hannibal for what he did to Beverly, Abigail, and Will himself. To really show Hannibal that no amount of spectacular sex or consumption of flesh from each other's bodies could *make* Will bond with him and forgive him for murdering his friend and his adoptive daughter. Despite his overpowering need for revenge, it never felt *right*, and he'd needed several glasses of whiskey to numb his conscience enough to be able to lead Margot into his bedroom.

Will wishes he could bond with Hannibal, by something clear and genuine. But instead they're bonded by a tight knot of lies and manipulation. Back-and-forth acts of deception and disloyalty. Will betraying Hannibal. Hannibal punishing Will for his betrayal. Will punishing Hannibal for punishing Will for his betrayal. A never-ending cycle. Like a loop of rope around both their necks, constantly tightening until they suffocate in their maddening desire to possess each other.

Will wants to break free and *breathe*. Ever since meeting Hannibal, his life has felt like a fever dream; tangible enough to convince him he's awake, but simultaneously bizarre enough that there's no way it could be real. Between his unrelenting nightmares, vivid hallucinations, and the baffling reality, he's become accustomed to expect absolutely anything.

It wouldn't surprise Will if he walked into the middle of a zombie apocalypse at Piazza del Duomo at this very second, or saw Gandalf fight aliens in the next alleyway. Or had lunch with Abigail's ghost. Or spotted Freddie Lounds in the crowd of tourists headed to see either the zombies or the aliens.

Hold on a second. He did just see one of those things.

Wherever there is action, there is Freddie Lounds. Will couldn't mistake her fiery corkscrew curls for anybody else. He blinks. Once, twice. With each movement of his eyelids, the picture in front of his eyes becomes clearer.

It's her.

Freddie Lounds, weaving her way through the crowd of people while searching for something in her bag, so far oblivious to the fact that Will is staring at her, wide-eyed, just mere meters away. The events in his and Hannibal's apartment this afternoon were real — he knows this because there's a stain of Antony's blood on his wrist that he forgot to wash off. But seeing Freddie in Florence? Will isn't sure.

Nightmare? Possibly, considering that he just had a nightmare involving her and Hannibal. But no, it's too peaceful, no one has died yet. Hallucination? Too long-lasting and detailed. Reality? No way in hell can it be. And that's precisely why *it is*.

It's real.

Will ducks into a small alley where he can't be seen. Suddenly, he's terrified. The fear strikes him like a bolt of lightning, instantly eradicating the anger that was threatening to overpower him.

Why is Freddie Lounds here? It must be because of him and Hannibal, there is no other explanation. That red-haired annoyance has been obsessed with them ever since the Garret Jacob Hobbs case.

Will gasps in sudden realization. It must be because of their impromptu getaway. Freddie was in hiding because Will faked her death, but since Will ran off to Europe with Hannibal, effectively putting the plan to capture Hannibal on hold, Jack must have let Freddie out. Or at least, he lessened the security detail on her which allowed her to weasel her way here undetected.

That makes sense. Will hasn't heard anything on Freddie Lounds' miraculous comeback from the dead. His terror lessens slightly, relieved by the fact that Hannibal probably doesn't know about his deception. Yet.

Because it's only a matter of time that he finds out. With Freddie here, snooping around for them both, Hannibal is going to notice. Will is seized by another wave of fear at the inevitable and curses Freddie Lounds for always ruining everything.

He's still in the alleyway, trying to hold back a panic attack. He's never been scared of Freddie before, only incredibly annoyed, but damn it if he isn't scared now. She has the power to ruin everything, everything Will has built with Hannibal. Every fragile building block on their shaky foundation is threatening to fall down and collapse into nothingness. She has the power to catch them, to separate them, to force them apart.

Will realizes he wants to save whatever this is between Hannibal and himself. In spite of what just happened in the apartment — Hannibal testing him by cheating, and Will going feral and killing an arguably innocent man — Will wants to be with Hannibal. He's never

known himself as much as he does when he's with him. He thinks that's something worth saving. Something worth fighting for.

Even though Will hates Hannibal sometimes and understandably wants to kill him, he also loves him and can't stand the thought of being separated from him. It's simply not an option.

He calms down enough to peek around the corner, a new sense of determination balancing out the fear. He spots her easily, taking pictures of the architecture in the Piazza del Duomo, as if she's here to sightsee like a normal tourist and not on a mission to ruin Will's life.

Will inhales deeply to regulate his breathing and follows Freddie at a distance. It's easier than he thought to blend in with the crowd, to become a wolf in sheep's clothing.

He trails Freddie for most of the night, easily staying out of sight and getting himself some street food at the same time. He'd never hear the end of it if he went back to Hannibal with his stomach rumbling, and Will is determined to make sure he's got Hannibal to go back to. Freddie Lounds is a problem that needs to be solved.

Will's mind runs through all the possibilities of what he could do to throw her off their scent, but none of them are things he can do tonight. Tonight, he follows her around and notes which hotel is hers so he knows where to find her later.

By the time he returns to the apartment, it's pitch black outside and somewhere in between very late or very early. He looks around with tired eyes and is relieved to see that no trace of that other man remains. Will is not angry at Hannibal, not after being so terrified at seeing Freddie, but he does not want a reminder of Hannibal's infidelity and manipulations.

Will enters the bedroom and sees Hannibal lying in bed, facing away from the door. Will sighs, knowing he's probably still awake but pretending not to be.

"I hope you changed the fucking sheets," Will says as he slides into them. He shuts his eyes, and sleep falls over him more quickly and peacefully than usual.

Chapter End Notes

One conflict resolved, but another one introduced!! We hope y'all liked this chapter :)
Ready for more?

Piccolo

Chapter Summary

No stable, long-term relationships are built on running off to Florence to start a new life on a whim. And now that the cracks are getting too big, Will fears they are going to have nothing left.

“Hannibal, we need to talk,” he begins cautiously.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Will wakes up to a decadent sugary smell coming from the kitchen and pleasantly saturating his nostrils. It seems like a normal morning in their idyllic life as a Florentine couple; Hannibal is up early to make them breakfast. Except that there is nothing normal about coming home to your partner getting into bed with another man, immediately killing the man in cold blood, and then proceeding to violently fuck your lover. Will stretches and yawns, skeptically wondering if this is just another thing they’re going to easily make disappear under the domestic bliss bullshit. Just as easily as Hannibal made Antony’s body disappear into the depths of Arno River, Will presumes.

Hannibal appears in the doorway, carrying a tray table full of food.

“Home-made buttermilk pancakes with vanilla-infused cream and fresh blueberries. Your favourite,” he announces with a wide smile.

There’s no way Will’s going to let them slip back into the lovey-dovey routine. Not with the phantoms of last night’s bloodbath still lingering in this very room. Will is determined to have a long talk about everything that happened in the last twenty or so hours, as well as everything that led up to it. But that doesn’t mean he should skip being polite and seem ungrateful for Hannibal’s cooking efforts. Besides, he’s hungry.

“Smells divine. Thank you,” Will replies.

They eat in silence, the pancakes tasting just as divine as they smell. The mutually-feigned casualness is still in the air, both of them wearing their masks of normalcy, pretending everything is fine. But the illusion is shattered, the masks are torn, and their real feelings are peeking through the cracks.

They need to talk.

They built their relationship, or whatever this is, on never-ending power plays, mindless lust, and an unhealthy obsession with each other. There is no real foundation. No stable, long-term

relationships are built on running off to Florence to start a new life on a whim. And now that the cracks are getting too big, Will fears they are going to have nothing left.

“Hannibal, we need to talk,” he begins cautiously, moving the tray table out of the way and turning to face the other man.

“We do,” Hannibal agrees, “but right now there’s a better way to use my mouth.”

And if it wasn’t obvious what Hannibal was referring to, it becomes so when Will feels Hannibal’s hand slide up his thigh as he elegantly drops onto his knees between Will’s open legs.

Will lets out an incredulous huff and rolls his eyes. The excitement is already forming in his groin at the prospect, but his rational mind isn’t so easily persuaded. He reminds himself that make-up sex isn’t going to get you far if you don’t have that stable foundation. They need to talk.

He opens his mouth to protest, but instead of words, a shaky moan comes out, elicited by nothing else than Hannibal’s lips against his rapidly-growing erection, separated by just the thin fabric of Will’s underwear.

With his usual belt and jeans in the way, Will may have been able to exercise enough self-control to stop this, but the feeling of Hannibal’s warm breath on his minimally covered crotch makes every sensible thought leave his brain. Hannibal really knows how to pick his timing well.

The man is the devil. And Will is going to hell.

The next moment he’s on his back on the bed, his briefs gone, Hannibal’s mouth finally enveloping him. Will summons up one last attempt to postpone Hannibal’s advances, even though he really doesn’t want to resist anymore.

“I’ve already bruised your throat, come on...” he says with a laugh.

“Last night was an unmistakable indication that acts of sadism only fuel your arousal further,” Hannibal replies smugly and licks a long hot strip from the base to the tip of Will’s now fully hardened cock, his eyes never leaving Will’s.

“Fuck...” is all Will can manage in response. So eloquent.

Hannibal smirks at him and licks his lips before wrapping them around the head. Will forgets to breathe as he watches Hannibal take his entire length into his mouth, the tip of his nose resting against the skin above Will’s pubic region. Somehow, he makes the act of deep-throating look so easy and elegant that Will can’t help but give a mesmerized gasp.

His hands find their way into Hannibal’s hair, gently twirling the smooth locks between his fingers. Then Hannibal’s hands come up to cover his own hands, closing them into fists around his hair. Clearly, Will’s intentions to be gentle aren’t wanted.

He looks down at Hannibal again and is met with a gaze that can only translate to *use my mouth*. And like a gentleman who'd hate to disappoint his lover, Will complies with the request. He readjusts his hands in Hannibal's hair for a better grip, and starts to move slowly, eliciting a content sigh from Hannibal.

They stay like that for a while; Will keeping the movement of his hips slow and steady, Hannibal staying with his mouth perfectly still, looking up at Will with sultry eyes, letting him set the pace. The act is all kinds of obscene, but Hannibal performs it with unfaltering gracefulness. He swirls his tongue around the head, then smoothly stretches his lips to swallow down the entire shaft, miraculously not gagging when the tip nudges the back of his throat. Between his needy moans, Will briefly thinks about whether Hannibal even has a gag reflex, and then Hannibal starts to suck, his hand gently cupping Will's balls, and Will stops thinking altogether.

He quickens the speed of his thrusts, making them sloppier and rougher. It's what Hannibal deserves after manipulating Will into killing out of jealousy. He clearly wanted to make Will feel possessive over him, so that's what Will is going to be. Selfish and harsh, not afraid to break Hannibal. As if Will brutally fucking him last night wasn't enough.

Hannibal takes it all, not showing any discomfort on his face except pinching his eyes shut every time his throat has to swallow around the intrusion. It's a grandiose sight. Hannibal the serial killer cannibal, on his knees in front of Will, *blowing* him for God's sake, in such a perfect image of vulnerability and submission. That notion is making Will's knees weak, his mind fuzzy, and that warm feeling in his groin threatening to spill over.

He pulls out as a warning, but Hannibal leans forward and wraps his lips back around the head of Will's cock and gives him one last look that is so full of lust, delight, and *pure want* that it sends Will over the edge. A guttural moan escapes him as he fills Hannibal's mouth, back arching and hips bucking uncontrollably. As his vision refocuses, Will realises that the sheer intensity of the pleasure he experienced sent him falling back onto the bed. He cranes his neck up to look at Hannibal, where the man is licking his lips clean of Will's release with an elated expression on his face, like a connoisseur tasting the world's most exquisite delicacy. And maybe, in Hannibal's subjective opinion, it's exactly what he's doing.

"Come here," Will mumbles, pulling him up onto the bed.

Hannibal follows, and Will wastes no time to pull down his slacks and wrap his hand around Hannibal's already leaking erection. Will joins their lips into a passionate kiss, pulling Hannibal's body on top of his with one arm, while his other hand brings his lover to climax with a few quick strokes.

Once they've caught their breaths and cleaned up, Hannibal lays his head on Will's chest and wraps his arms around him in a possessive hug.

Will sighs and pets Hannibal's hair softly. "I accept your apology."

He knows Hannibal isn't exactly regretful for what he's done, as it got him the desired result, but he appreciates the gesture, letting him know that it won't happen again. Will had long

clocked Hannibal's love language as being acts of service, anyway. Followed by words of affirmation, of course.

"You are the only one I want, darling boy," Hannibal says softly. Will smiles at him.

"We see each other better than anyone else," Will replies, broaching the subject again, "But we've also had a blindspot towards each other that has lasted too long. You know I'm right, Hannibal."

"Yes," the older man sighs. "I confess to have second guessed your intentions, much like I expect you have second guessed mine."

Will hums. "It's hard to trust each other after.... Everything."

Hannibal nods, as well as he can lying against Will's chest. "My feelings for you are genuine, Will. Ask me anything you wish, and I will not lie to you."

"Same here," Will exhales. "This has to be a two-way street if we are to rebuild the trust between us."

He chews his lip and decides to ask the first question, the one fueling most of his paranoia.

"Why are we pretending to be a normal couple? All these weeks, and we haven't once addressed the past or what either of us truly are."

"You mean why haven't I killed, when given the opportunity? Why have we both been avoiding the past and instead testing each other?"

Will nods and Hannibal considers for a beat.

"Truthfully, I was surprised that you came with me to Florence at all," Hannibal starts quietly. "I did not expect you to uproot your life for me, even after the night of passion we shared. Because of my surprise, I became distrustful. I wondered if you were, perhaps, accompanying me just to capture me in the place I love most. If you wanted to hurt me, that would be the way to inflict the most damage."

Will's heart aches as Hannibal continues. "I did not broach the subject of our past because I feared it would remind you of all the hate you hold for me. I admit I... did not want to do anything that might cause you to leave me."

Will listens to Hannibal explain and almost laughs through the pain in his chest. "We really are just alike. I also didn't bring up the past because I was afraid you would leave me. But Hannibal, I'm here because I want to be. I am not trying to trap you." The *anymore* goes unsaid. "I left everything to come here because I want you *that badly*. Do not doubt my feelings for you."

"And do not doubt mine for you, dear boy," Hannibal says softly.

Will lowers his eyes. "I was. I was doubting, and I was just as confused and paranoid about it as you were. I wanted to know why you were ignoring the violence in me when you were so interested in it back in Baltimore."

“I want that violence to emerge out of you organically,” Hannibal murmurs. “I want you as you are, Will, not as a twisted version made into my own image.”

A warm feeling spreads into Will’s heart. “I know that now. I want you just as you are, too.”

Hannibal lifts his head to study Will’s face and hesitates. “May I ask why? It wasn’t so long ago that you were trying to catch me, or kill me. Was our shared consumption really enough to change your anger into compassion?”

Will has thought a lot about that recently, so he readily answers Hannibal with honesty.

“Yes,” he says simply. “It was that powerful. I was already... slipping, before that. While trying to hook you, I had to be honest with myself and explored all those dark parts that you love most about me. I also had to be honest about the connection between us.”

Will pauses, remembering how it felt that night to partake in each other so fully. “Our bond can’t be simplified into any small number of causes, but I found myself thinking about why it was so powerful. Why you were the person in my life I felt closest to, after everything. I think I realized that I valued that bond, and how I felt when I was with you, more than I valued my anger towards you.”

Hannibal makes a contemplative noise. “I am grateful for that night, then.”

Will grins. “Weren’t you already?”

“I was,” Hannibal allows. “It’s not every day that one gets to engage in an act of true mutual cannibalism, let alone with one’s beloved.”

Will’s smile grows sharper. “Nor is it every day that one gets to witness their beloved kill for them.”

Hannibal smirks. “As we have just explored, dear Will, it seemed we were both pushing each other to proclaim their devotion with blood.”

“Yes, but you succeeded,” Will says, annoyed. “It never occurred to me to fuck someone else.”

Hannibal kisses Will’s cheek to calm him. “Desperate times call for desperate measures, my love.”

Will rolls his eyes. “You’re so fucking smug. I hate you.”

“No you don’t,” Hannibal counters, his smile all complacent and self-satisfied.

“No, I don’t,” Will huffs, fond. “But no more testing each other.”

“No more testing each other,” Hannibal echoes. “There’s no need, now that we know how we feel towards each other.”

“No,” Will agrees. “Now that we’ve laid the past to rest.”

As Hannibal nuzzles his face back into Will's chest and sinks them both back into that early morning haze, Will desperately tries to push the image of Freddie Lounds walking, alive and carefree in the sparkling Florence night, out of his mind.

It is early evening and Hannibal is at the Palazzo, meticulously tidying the items displayed in his exhibition of medieval torture instruments, when he hears footsteps approaching.

“*Dottore* Lecter, do you have a moment?”

Hannibal turns to look at the man, intending to point out that the exhibition has closed for the day and ask him to come back tomorrow. However, the man pulls out a big flashy badge from his wallet and shows it to Hannibal.

“Inspector Pazzi, *Questura di Firenze*,” he introduces himself.

“Pleasure to meet you,” Hannibal responds with a charming smile, shaking Pazzi's hand.
“How may I help?”

His gut feeling tells him that Pazzi looks vaguely familiar. Then again, all law enforcement lackeys seem to have the same, unintelligent face. None of them alarm him anymore. Hannibal has grown used to constantly being around all kinds of police, thanks to the FBI asking him to consult on murders of his own making — which is infinitely entertaining and hilarious even to this day. His inkling of familiarity is, however, tugging at his mind quite annoyingly.

“I'm investigating the disappearance of Antony Dimmond,” the man says gruffly.

“Disappearance?” Hannibal asks, raising an eyebrow to display just the right amount of innocent curiosity.

“No one has seen or heard from him in two weeks,” Pazzi explains. “After talking to a few of your coworkers, I learned that you and Mr. Dimmond were... closely acquainted.”

“Rumours certainly spread fast here at the Palazzo,” Hannibal counters delicately, his polite smile not faltering.

Pazzi nods. “How would you describe your relationship then?”

Hannibal resists the urge to roll his eyes in annoyance. Hiding the fact that Antony had been very relentlessly flirting with him would be pointless, especially since Pazzi has already heard about it from their gossipy colleagues.

Hannibal realises with rising irritation that if anyone was asked about Antony, of course they would bring up Hannibal by association. Certain Palazzo employees have strong opinions

about Hannibal's "unconventional" sexuality, and others, like Sogliato, have strong opinions about his character in general. Hannibal doesn't doubt that they jumped on the chance to badmouth him to Pazzi, regardless of whether they genuinely believed Hannibal was behind Antony's fate.

The way Pazzi is looking at him only reinforces Hannibal's thoughts further. There is a certain glint in his eyes, the kind that indicates that he sees Hannibal as something more than just another random employee he has to routinely interview at the Palazzo. Pazzi is examining him like a hawk, taking in every detail of his appearance with the intention to... memorize? Remember? *Recognize*?

Perhaps Hannibal's gut feeling of recognition wasn't inaccurate after all.

"Our relationship is far more "strictly professional" than Mr. Dimmond probably hopes for," Hannibal explains tactfully.

He makes sure to talk about Antony in the *present* tense, because as far as the respected Palazzo employee Hannibal Lecter is concerned, Antony isn't dead; only missing, and his lover's outburst of murderous jealousy had absolutely nothing to do with it. Absolutely *nothing* at all, Hannibal thinks to himself with a secret smirk.

"I'm sure that kind of behaviour makes you rather uncomfortable," Pazzi responds with polite compassion, studying Hannibal with watchful eyes. "Do you have a partner?"

Hannibal can see where this conversation is heading, and he is very much displeased with its direction. But again, denying things would look suspicious.

"I do."

"Is she aware of Mr. Dimmond and his, uh, interest in you?"

"Inspector, I sincerely hope you are not insinuating that I have given my partner any reason to be jealous. Because I would never do *him* such discourtesy," Hannibal says lightly.

If Pazzi is going to be brash enough to practically accuse Hannibal of being involved in petty love triangle games, then Hannibal is going to curb his suspicions in an equally bold way. He figures that acting mildly insulted is what's going to make Pazzi drop the subject.

Besides, Pazzi must be very well aware by now that Hannibal's partner is not a "she", so the fact that he is pretending to be more clueless than he is, is alarming to Hannibal. Alarming, annoying, and quite rude.

"Of course not, *Dottore* . I am simply gathering information — standard procedure," Pazzi assures him. However, the way he keeps eyeing Hannibal remains apprehensive and calculating.

The inspector is practically begging to be added to Hannibal's rolodex, if he still had one. That doesn't mean that he doesn't keep a mental list though, in case inspiration for a *feast* strikes again. Hannibal finds himself mentally adding Pazzi to that list right now.

“Mr. Dimmond is a bright man and a real asset to the Palazzo. I do hope he is found safe and sound,” Hannibal states in a sincere tone.

Pazzi gives him a pensive nod, shifting uncomfortably when his eyes lands on a particularly gruesome-looking torture instrument consisting of two wooden bars with teeth-like spikes between them.

“Since you don’t seem to have further questions, would you like a quick tour of the torture instruments?” Hannibal asks, following the man’s gaze to the gnarly artifact. “That is a knee splitter.”

“Perhaps another time,” Pazzi deflects, way too quickly for someone who’s trying his hardest to seem unbothered. Hannibal bites back a self-indulgent snicker.

“Perhaps,” Hannibal echoes, flashing the man a seemingly innocuous smile.

He sees Pazzi out and finishes tidying up the exhibition space. Something about the encounter leaves a sour taste in his mouth. It isn’t the usual apprehension that accompanies being questioned about a recent murder — Hannibal is used to being questioned, and sometimes even being suspected. No, there was something deeply unsettling in the way Pazzi looked at him, as if he recognized Hannibal. It seems plausible since Hannibal has history in Florence, and the man has been working for the police for decades.

Something tells him he’s going to hear from this nosy inspector again. Hannibal makes a mental note to share his speculations with Will, just so he is prepared if Pazzi tries to question him too. They’re firmly together now, partners in crime and in life, which means that he needs to be completely honest and transparent with Will. Much more so than one would be in a normal relationship.

It’s time for Will to learn everything about *il Mostro*, and what would be a more perfect place for that than the very room where Hannibal was initially inspired? He now knows exactly where to take Will on their next romantic outing, and can’t hold back the happy smile on his face as he thinks of it.

Chapter End Notes

One conflict resolved, another begins! Let us know what you think in the comments :)

Cappuccino

Chapter Summary

They hold hands as they walk through the Uffizi Gallery, Hannibal leading them towards a particular room with purpose. Holding hands is something Will is used to; it's been a stable element in their spectacle of a normal couple in love, but this time it feels different. For the first time, it feels fully genuine.

They're not playing house anymore, they're building one. Starting from that foundation they previously lacked; replacing the rotten wood with trust, honesty, and open communication — all the building blocks of a healthy relationship.

Chapter Notes

The plot thickens ~

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

After Hannibal leaves him with a sweet kiss and heads off to work at the Palazzo, Will rolls out of bed and gets ready. He has big plans for today.

He's been stalking Freddie Lounds for about two weeks now, and she is boringly predictable. She leaves her hotel at the same time every morning, eats at the same places at the same times, and spends her days browsing the open-air markets and staking out the Palazzo Capponi.

To Will's amusement and annoyance, Freddie Lounds is stalking Hannibal.

He discovered this the first day he followed her, the day after he killed Antony Dimmond. He waited outside her hotel in the early morning hours, determined to find out what she's up to. He wasn't surprised to discover that she was indeed in Florence because of Hannibal.

Will's been watching her watch Hannibal every single day, and every day he's relieved that she finds nothing. She knows Hannibal works at the Palazzo, and she follows him home to his and Will's apartment after that, but she has nothing else to go on because Hannibal isn't doing anything illicit. Will watches her for hours, until Freddie gives up for the night and goes back to her hotel.

Hannibal doesn't mind it when Will comes back home late. After their heartfelt conversation, they trust each other now. Although Will doesn't tell Hannibal where he's been, Hannibal doesn't seem antsy about not knowing. If anything, he seems pleased that Will has something else to occupy his time rather than sit in the apartment bored all day.

Today, Will manages to make it to Freddie Lounds's hotel right when she leaves to get her morning coffee from the usual cafe in the square. He's been following her for a couple weeks, spending that time obsessing over her intentions and what he's going to do about it.

At first, Will was just going to kill her quickly and quietly and be done with it. Freddie Lounds is a threat to their life here, a big one. She may not have anything to go on now, but Will has no doubt she will continue sneaking around until she digs up something. She may decide to inform Hannibal's employers of their past back in Baltimore, something that Hannibal has been careful to keep from the Palazzo academics. No doubt they would be fearful of their curator's partner once being charged with serial murders, regardless of the fact that Will was acquitted.

On top of that, Hannibal still believes that Freddie is dead, that Will killed her months ago. Will is ashamed of lying to Hannibal about it, and is afraid of what his lover will do when he finds out Will lied to him. Will does not want that happening, so he thinks about killing Freddie quietly without Hannibal finding out.

But now, after following Freddie for days and having time to think about it, Will has decided to go in another direction. He is committed to Hannibal now, and doesn't want there to be any more secrets between them. Will feels incredibly guilty for lying, and regrets not killing Freddie when he first had the chance. If he kills her quietly now, he'll have to live with the guilt of lying to Hannibal for the rest of their life together.

So instead, Will decides to kill her and display her body for Hannibal, an offering wrapped up in an apology. It is the only way to absolve his guilt and proclaim his intentions towards Hannibal one final time. Hannibal will likely feel betrayed at first as he realizes Will lied to

him for so long, but Will hopes that Hannibal will forgive him after he sees how Will lovingly killed her and displayed her just for Hannibal. After seeing just how much Hannibal had enjoyed Will killing Antony Dimmond, he has no doubt that Hannibal would love this gift.

Will is getting hot just thinking about how Hannibal would look at him over the display of Freddie's body. Pride, love, and desire would all shine out of his sharp eyes and threaten to drown Will. Anger would be there too, at finding out about the lie, and Will hopes that Hannibal will take that fury out on him with a brutal love-making session. God, he can't wait.

As Will follows Freddie to the Palazzo today, he thinks about the possible ways he could display her for Hannibal.

He could tress her up like the pig she is and stick an apple in her mouth. Hannibal might find it amusing, but it also might unpleasantly remind him of the conversation they had back in Baltimore, when he thought he was eating Freddie. Will had called her "long pig" then, and Hannibal might not appreciate the call-back to that memory after he discovers it had been a lie.

It would be poetic to cut off Freddie's hands and tongue, taking the tools she used as a journalist to spew filth in her tabloid. Hannibal would love the symbolism behind that, but it wouldn't be personal enough to him. Will needs something that conveys his plethora of feelings.

Another possibility would be to carve out her heart, like Freddie had done to Will in his nightmare. He would feel righteous while doing so, and Hannibal would like the gesture of Will offering a heart to him. However, this option is a little too cliché for Will's taste. He needs something special.

He ponders these options and more as he follows Freddie from the Palazzo to the market she frequents. Will keeps tabs on her looking at clothes while he stands at the fruit cart, perusing apples. He's so focused that he doesn't realize someone's trying to get his attention until the man stands directly next to him and speaks.

“Those are good apples,” a gravelly voice observes. “They are only found on the outskirts of Florence.”

Will immediately tenses and snaps his head up to make eye contact with a man he’s never seen before. He looks middle-aged and tired, but with a hardness Will’s learned to associate with law enforcement.

“Oh?” he says suspiciously, purposefully not looking at Freddie Lounds. Who is this guy? Did he catch Will stalking Freddie? Is Will about to get himself arrested?

“They are,” the man affirms. “My wife adores them. You should take some home, see if your family does as well.”

Will’s eyes narrow. This man seems innocent, and he’s not outright questioning Will about Freddie, which a police officer would do when they catch someone stalking. He relaxes slightly, assured that his sneaking wasn’t detected.

Will looks back to the apples and attempts to be friendly as to further throw off suspicion. “My partner does like them, actually. He’s particular about food, and asks me to get these specific apples every time I go to the market.”

It’s not even a lie; Will has been collecting Hannibal’s special ingredients for weeks now.

The man nods. “Hm. A man of taste. May I ask how he learned about them? They are rarely known to foreigners. Is he Florentine?”

“He used to live here in his youth, so he’s less foreign than I am but not quite Florentine. He is very knowledgeable about the local delicacies, though,” Will grins. Talking about Hannibal fills him with pride and a sort of happiness that he’s never been lucky enough to have before. It feels nice to brag about their relationship to people.

“Ah, I see,” the man responds. “I presume he also takes you to see all of the local art galleries. We have a number of famous ones.”

“Oh yes,” Will agrees fondly. “Hannibal loves showing me all the old masterpieces, he’s quite a talented artist himself.”

The man smiles. “Hearing about others’ happiness is a joyous thing. It was nice to meet you. Enjoy your apples.”

“I will, thank you,” Will replies politely.

The man nods at him and turns, leaving Will behind to once again focus on the red-haired snoop of his nightmares.

They hold hands as they walk through the Uffizi Gallery, Hannibal leading them towards a particular room with purpose. Holding hands is something Will is used to; it’s been a stable element in their spectacle of a normal couple in love, but this time it feels different. For the first time, it feels fully genuine.

They’re not playing house anymore, they’re *building* one. Starting from that foundation they previously lacked; replacing the rotten wood with trust, honesty, and open communication — all the building blocks of a healthy relationship.

Hannibal finds the room he was looking for and guides them to sit on a bench in front of one large painting. Will vaguely recognises it from one of his old art history books from college. The painting features several notable characters from classical mythology, gathered in a garden.

“Botticelli’s *Primavera*,” Hannibal explains, entranced. “I used to come here for hours on end, sketching it. This piece was what first inspired me to make art out of the unworthy, Will. Florence is where I became a man.”

Will gazes at the painting and imagines it; a young Hannibal, face glowing and unlined by years of hard experience, mooning over this classic piece of art. He can see how it would have been just the thing to inspire Hannibal to commit his first murders.

He turns back to Hannibal, who is watching him with shining eyes.

“If I saw you every day, forever, Will,” Hannibal murmurs, “I would remember this time.”

Will blushes and can’t hold back the smile that breaks across his face.

“Thank you for bringing me here,” he says softly, squeezing Hannibal’s hand that is still nestled in his own. “It’s magnificent.”

They admire the painting in silence for a moment.

“Tell me about it,” Will requests, idly stroking Hannibal’s hand with his thumb.

Hannibal hums. “Have you heard of *il Mostro di Firenze* ?”

“The Monster of Florence,” Will translates. His expression changes to sheer disbelief as he remembers the famous international case and realizes. “ *You* ? Of course...”

“I was young and easily inspired,” Hannibal elaborates in a nonchalant and somewhat dreamy tone. “I recreated a segment of this painting.”

Will can imagine it in his mind; lifeless bodies made to look like mythological figures and arranged atop of green leaves. Like all Hannibal’s tableaux, it would’ve been absolutely breathtaking. He wishes he could’ve seen it in person.

“There were others too, right?”

“Several,” Hannibal responds ambiguously, giving Will a serene smile.

“How many?” Will suddenly wants to know. He wants to know exactly how dangerous and lethal this monster is that he’s come to love. “Ten?”

Hannibal stays silent, studying the painting with his tranquil and appreciative eyes.

“Twenty?” Will persists.

Hannibal smiles, still looking at the Botticelli. “Give or take.”

“*Jesus...*” Will breathes.

“I believe Jesus killed many more than me.”

Will snorts in amusement but is uncontrollably attracted to Hannibal’s power. One day, he’s going to ask for his total kill count. Will wonders if Hannibal even bothers to keep track of all the lives he’s taken, or if he has a general estimate. Either way, Will wants to know the answer. He wants to know everything.

“I hope this helps to clarify why I haven’t been inclined to kill anyone during our stay here,” Hannibal continues. “*Il Mostro* is a completed chapter of my life, and it belongs in the past.”

“That makes sense,” Will agrees. “And it wasn’t that long ago, in the grand scheme of things. Somebody here could recognize you from back then.”

“Indeed. In fact, I suspect it may have already happened,” Hannibal says contemplatively. His voice remains calm but noticeably drops in volume.

Will frowns and turns to look at him, immediately tensing up. He feels Hannibal interlace the fingers of their hands in an act of reassurance while he leans in to press his lips to Will’s ear.

“Inspector Pazzi from the Florence Police,” Hannibal whispers. “He questioned me yesterday about Mr. Dimmond, and I suspect that he *recognized* me.”

Will’s eyes widen as he hears the words, and he subconsciously tightens his grip on Hannibal’s hand.

“Hannibal, this is dangerous,” Will says, hushed.

“It’s certainly an unpleasant complication,” Hannibal grants.

Will bites his tongue before asking if Hannibal is going to do anything about this nosy detective. In his mind, he is fearing to hear Hannibal’s typical response of ‘What’s to be done about that?’ even though this time, killing would be warranted. Hannibal wouldn’t hesitate when it comes to preserving their safety. Will knows he wouldn’t.

His overactive imagination starts painting pictures of Pazzi stalking Hannibal, and even possibly Will, the same way Will is stalking Freddie Lounds; creeping in the shadows, hiding among the crowd, following their every move. Or maybe he’d be bold and not bother hiding that he’s investigating them, putting pressure on them by explicitly questioning them. Like Jack always does.

That’s when Will realizes. The man from the market yesterday, the overly friendly one. He asked Will about his partner, if he’s ever been to Florence before, if he took Will to art galleries...

Will wants to face-palm. That must have been Pazzi, digging into Hannibal's life, and Will was distracted by Freddie and stupidly gave him vital information. He used Hannibal's name, and mentioned that he likes sketching. He basically told Pazzi that Hannibal was *il Mostro* .

"I... might have made it worse," Will groans. "I was at the market yesterday getting those apples you like and a man approached me. He didn't say his name, but he asked questions about you. I didn't think anything of it and was happy to talk about you, but now..."

"Now you believe that man was Inspector Pazzi and fear that you confirmed his suspicions about my identity," Hannibal finishes.

Will bows his head. "I'm sorry."

"Don't be, darling. It was an oversight on my part," Hannibal responds in a soothing tone and lifts their still interlaced hands up to his lips, planting a kiss on Will's knuckles — an apology of its own kind. "I should have told you about my past earlier, so you would know to be cautious about it."

"We both should've been more open with each other," Will admits pensively.

They should have both known that keeping information from each other only causes trouble. And sure enough, the repercussion of their lack of communication is now threatening their freedom and future together. In retrospect, they would have saved each other a great deal of heartbreak and pain if they had just talked things through instead of trying to manipulate each other, Will thinks bitterly, blinking the images of the grim BSHCI cell out of his mind.

"And from now on, we will be," Hannibal promises.

Will simply nods, scared that if he opens his mouth, it will be evident that he can't keep his part of the promise of mutual honesty. He shifts closer to Hannibal, subconsciously seeking comfort from the guilt that is enveloping him, winding tightly around his chest.

Will feels like the most despicable man on earth. He's sitting here, sharing an intimate moment with his lover, hearing him be *honest* with Will about his apprehension regarding Pazzi, all while Will lies to him about keeping no more secrets.

His secret has a name — Freddie Lounds. And as long as she is alive and thriving, there can be no unconditional trust and honesty between Will and Hannibal.

Will has to make this right, as soon as possible.

Chapter End Notes

Let us know what you think!! Thanks for reading :)

Lungo

Chapter Summary

Hannibal is not reassured by Will's words. If he's giving Hannibal consent to hurt him, then he must feel incredibly guilty about whatever he's done. Hannibal's heart aches as his mind comes to the most rational conclusion, and his feet move to follow Will into the dining room. The scene that fills his vision makes him gasp and he automatically drops the bust onto the floor.

Chapter Notes

The plot thickens! Let us know what you think in the comments :)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will's plan to get rid of his red-haired secret has two parts. The first part was easy, and Will pulled it off without a hitch. Breaking into Hannibal's torture instrument exhibition and stealing a few spears and pikes was a piece of cake, so much so that Will makes a mental note to discuss the Palazzo's security with Hannibal later.

The next part is more complicated. He needs to lure Freddie into their apartment, and he knows it won't be an easy task. Freddie is clever and careful, and already thinks Will is a murderous psychopath — the fact that he so convincingly played the part where he ruthlessly killed and ate her only adds to the disturbed picture she already had of him. She isn't going to trust him easily.

But Will does not have a choice. It's only a matter of time before Hannibal discovers that Freddie has been stalking him, and therefore learns that Will lied to him about killing her back in Virginia. It's a ticking time bomb that Will needs to beat, or it will be the end of everything. Betraying Hannibal's trust is something Will would pay for with his life, he is sure. He would deserve it, too.

Hannibal's trust — and the lifelong companionship that comes with it — is everything that Will's ever wanted. Now that he has it, he is going to do whatever it takes to keep it.

With those thoughts fueling him, Will jumpstarts his plan and slides into the empty seat opposite Freddie at the cafe where she gets her morning coffee every day. He greets her with his best disarming smile and allows her a moment to process his sudden appearance.

“Hello, Freddie.”

She seems taken aback and understandably alarmed, but doesn’t immediately leave and lets him engage her in conversation, albeit suspiciously.

“Hello, Graham.”

Will wastes no time and goes straight to the point.

“I know who murdered Antony Dimmond, and I’m sure you do too. But unlike you, I can *prove* it,” he says in a low, conspiratory tone, eyes scanning the people around them, as if he is scared of being eavesdropped on.

Freddie’s eyes narrow. “Why should I believe you, Graham? You’ve been off the grid for months now, who knows what you’ve been getting up to. And with whom.”

“I’m sure you have a few theories about that.”

Freddie just nods and looks skeptical. She could always see the darkness in Will, even back when he tried his hardest to hide it. She is scared of him, but she is scared of Hannibal more. Will decides to play on that and go the logical route.

Rationally thinking, there are a million reasons for Will to resent Hannibal, ranging from small, relatively harmless acts of deception to murdering Beverly Katz in cold blood and slicing her body into pieces. Beverly, whom Will considered a friend. Will tries to focus on that pain and channels it into his words.

“He killed people that I care about, framed me for several murders, took advantage of my vulnerable state, and abused me,” Will responds, putting enough venom into his voice to poison the entire city. “He put me through hell, Freddie. I want him to burn.”

Hannibal has done a lot of abominable things. Things that are unforgivable. It shouldn't be difficult for Will to gather the unresolved animosity that he harbours towards the man and channel it out. But when Will looks inwards to find that hellfire of hatred burning inside him, he realizes it's nothing but a small spark, slowly being stifled by what he and Hannibal have built together.

It turns out that those unforgivable things have somehow been forgiven.

“You clearly don't hate him enough, if you're *coupling* with him,” Freddie counters, as if she's somehow able to read Will's mind. “You literally dropped everything — the plan, your job, your *dogs* — to run off to Europe with him.”

“I haven't dropped the plan, I'm furthering it. The whole romance thing is an act,” Will objects, rolling his eyes for good measure. “I'm collecting evidence to put him behind bars. I'd only get this close if I ran off with him, and I need you to take what I've got so far to Jack.”

Saying those words out loud ignites a visceral reaction in Will — every cell in his body is rebelling at the idea of betraying Hannibal. He couldn't do it even if he tried. Will doesn't want to punish Hannibal for the atrocities he has done. Instead, he wants to give Hannibal a chance to make it up to him.

“If you've got proof that he killed Dimmond, why don't you go to Jack now, yourself?” Freddie asks, crossing her arms.

“I want to prove he is the Chesapeake Ripper,” Will lies smoothly.

“He’s not stupid, Graham. He won’t give you anything, not even now that you’re playing house.”

Will refrains from gritting his teeth, Freddie’s words stabbing him exactly where he bleeds the most. They *were* playing house, but they aren’t anymore. It’s real now, and Will is going to do what he has to do in order to keep it.

“He’s fond of me,” Will replies. “That’s a weakness I’m playing into.”

With every lie that spills from Will’s mouth, he becomes more and more certain of where his loyalty lies. Where it’s *always* been. Will may be a killer, maybe even a cruel one, but he isn’t cruel enough to take advantage of someone’s feelings and shatter their heart. Even if that someone is a remorseless serial killer. Freddie really doesn’t know him as well as she thinks she does, and Will is fully taking advantage of that fact.

“Like that’s ever going to work. You think you’re playing him, but he’s playing you,” Freddie says, twirling a fiery strand of hair between her fingers.

“He trusts me enough that he killed Dimmond *in front of me*. Now, do you want the proof or not?” Will retorts, standing up. Enough chatter; he doesn’t have infinite time to waste.

True to her reckless and curious reputation, Freddie follows Will to his and Hannibal’s apartment, where Will is keeping the alleged proof. Will is pleased to realise that he is better at manipulation and lying than he thought, and that he certainly enjoys it too. Hannibal is right, this sort of thing comes naturally to him.

“What a nice place,” Freddie appraises, taking in the tasteful furniture and decor. “I’m sure you’re enjoying being Dr. Lecter’s sugar baby at least to some degree.”

“Perhaps I would, if he weren’t a cannibalistic serial killer,” Will replies icily.

He guides Freddie into the kitchen. The tile floor there will make the cleanup far easier, compared to the carpets in the living room. Plus, the dinner table is where he's going to display his tableau.

"The freezer. He's eating Mr. Dimmond, isn't he," Freddie deduces.

Will nods, inviting her to have a look inside. Having her distracted by perusing the freezer gives Will a moment to collect his thoughts before going through with his plan. He takes a deep breath, eyes focusing on the back of Freddie's head.

He has killed before, sure, but none of it has been premeditated. He can justify killing Hobbs by saving Abigail, and killing Tier by saving himself. Killing Dimmond, well... jealousy isn't a great justification for murder, but it earned him Hannibal's trust. So, Will doesn't regret it in the slightest. He just needs an equally good reason for killing Freddie.

And if Will thinks about it, there is no better justification than making things right with his lover and ensuring their freedom.

Will knows the *who*, *what*, *where*, *why*, and *how* of his plan. He just needs to stop putting off the *when*.

Suddenly, Freddie turns from the open freezer to face him.

"You know, I want something in return," she drawls with a calculating smile.

Will swallows hard, realising he missed his chance at ambushing her while she was focused on the contents of the freezer. "Yeah?"

"I want an interview with you. A Freddie Lounds exclusive, about capturing the Ripper."

"Sure. Not now, though," Will mutters, suddenly flustered. "After."

“We’re going to call it “*The Empath Strikes Back; How the Ripper Got His Own Heart Ripped Out*,”” Freddie announces.

Will stays silent and forces a smile. He is supposed to like this, supposed to feel triumph at the idea of defeating the Ripper. But instead, the words are making every muscle in his body tense up, twisting and coiling tight like a spring.

Completely oblivious to Will’s internal reaction, Freddie launches into a narration of her future article, her voice dramatic and suspenseful:

“Who would’ve thought that Hannibal Lecter, also known as the Chesapeake Ripper, is nothing but a stupid, love-struck fool? —”

Hearing Freddie equate Hannibal to someone gullible and foolish tightens the spring inside Will even more. He feels his bones fill with rage, his hands curl into fists, and his jaw clench so hard it hurts.

“— Who knew that Will Graham would be the manipulative fisherman that lured Lecter in with counterfeit love and hooked him by the heart?”

The mere idea that Will would do something like that to his lover is what makes the spring snap.

Propelled by the roiling anger that’s wound him up so tight, Will pounces onto Freddie, his hands closing around her throat. Her words hurt like daggers, so he does exactly what every atom in his body is telling him to do — stop her from talking.

He squeezes tighter, backing her against the wall. She tries to put up a fight, hands floundering for a weapon that’s likely hidden in her bag or clothes — she’d have to be not only reckless but plain stupid to walk into Hannibal Lecter’s house unarmed — but none of it makes Will ease his firm grip on her neck.

They end up on the floor, Will crushing her chest with his weight. Her legs shake and she tries to splutter, but after several long minutes that feel like lightyears, she finally stops breathing and her body goes lax.

Will rolls off her onto his side, his chest heaving at a rate that's double the normal, as if he'd literally stolen her breath. The room is awfully quiet, apart from his gradually-slowng inhales and exhales. For a moment, he feels empty. Almost peaceful. But then, the typhoon of emotions comes crashing in.

The pleasure in taking a worthless life.

The sheer power of his bare hands.

The relief that it's finally done.

The cruelty of the act itself.

To say that humanity doesn't have a thirst for cruelty would be a lie. Hannibal would tell him so, pointing out that for centuries, people have loved witnessing public executions, watching Gladiators battle each other to death, and worshipping a god that wiped all life from Earth except Noah's Ark. To be cruel is to be human.

Hannibal would be pleased at what Will has done, he has to be. Although he will be hurt that Will lied to him about Freddie, Will remembers the way Hannibal looked at him when he killed Antony Dimmond. The pride radiating from his face was enough to sustain Will for a lifetime. Nothing else matters, except Hannibal and the different ways in which he looks at Will in love.

Will gets to his feet slowly and carefully lifts Freddie's lifeless body onto the kitchen table. He undresses her first, then fetches the scalpel that Hannibal uses to sharpen his drawing pencils. Will has seen enough medical shows and witnessed enough post-mortem

examinations to have a decent idea of how to cut through a body in order to extract the organ he needs.

The lungs.

Will's introduction to the Chesapeake Ripper was Cassie Boyle's body, impaled on a stag head with her lungs removed. In fact, as he learned later, Hannibal deliberately killed and displayed Boyle as a gift for Will, to help him better understand the Minnesota Shrike and introduce him to the Ripper. Now, Will is going to recreate the same murder tableau using Freddie Lounds's body, this time as an apology gift to help Hannibal better understand Will.

Namely, to help him understand that Will is remorseful for staging Freddie's death instead of actually going through with it, and this is his attempt to make amends. The display will be a declaration of Will's love and devotion, a grand promise to never keep secrets from Hannibal again.

It takes some careful precision with the scalpel, as well as brute force to break the ribcage, for Will to successfully remove the lungs. It takes even more force and physical exertion to impale Freddie's body on the array of spears and pikes that Will stole from Hannibal's exhibition at the Palazzo. By the end of it, his muscles are aching and his head feels heavy from the smell of blood and viscera, but there is a deep sense of satisfaction in his bones.

With the body laid out on the dinner table, the lungs in the fridge, and the mess he'd made now cleaned up, Will's feet carry him towards the bedroom. Hannibal isn't due to return from work for a couple of hours, and Will could use some rest.

Hannibal returns from the Palazzo in a mood. There was a theft the previous night, and some of the prized torture instruments from Hannibal's display went missing. It set off the paranoia he thought he put to bed with his and Will's discussion, but Hannibal didn't really consider it paranoia. He was simply being rational. Nothing else was stolen from the entire Palazzo, just a few of his select torture tools. It was too specialized to be anything but a warning for him personally.

Hannibal was consumed by thoughts the entire day, trying to determine who would threaten him in this way. Possibly Jack? Or Pazzi? Hannibal spent hours trying to piece together what happened from the dreadfully incompetent and sweaty night guard, trying to discover if Jack was in the country. As a result of that, Hannibal barely had any time to actually work.

As soon as he steps into the apartment, he freezes in shocked recognition. There is a pervasive smell of sickeningly sweet, tasteless perfume. He tenses because he immediately knows exactly who wears that particular scent.

But it can't be. Freddie Lounds is long dead, and Hannibal knows this because Will killed her and they ate her flesh together.

Unless she isn't dead, and the meat wasn't hers. Unless Will *lied* to him.

Two options form in Hannibal's frantic mind. Either his senses are deceiving him, or Will is deceiving him. He's unsure what to believe. He trusts Will. He *wants* to trust Will. But at the same time, Hannibal trusts his senses more. They have never been wrong before. If Hannibal can smell Freddie Lounds, it means she is here in Florence. Alive.

Still, Hannibal searches for any possibility to make it not so. Maybe it's simply paranoia, and someone in Florence just happens to use the same perfume as Freddie. But rationally, that doesn't add up. Hannibal Lecter isn't paranoid. He is always prepared and doesn't leave anything up to chance.

"Will?" he asks cautiously.

There is no response.

Hannibal's eyes quickly dart across the room, assessing every detail about his surroundings. There are no signs of forced entry or markings on the furniture and walls that would indicate a struggle. In fact, everything looks exactly like it was when Hannibal left in the morning. Except for one thing.

His scalpel. It's missing from its usual spot beside his pencils.

Hannibal feels his body prepare for action; the widening of his pupils, the tensing of his muscles, his breathing turning deep but quiet, every part of him freezing and falling silent, not entirely sure if he is the prey or the predator. His eyes start scanning the room again, with a different intent this time; noting everything that can be used as a weapon and mapping out all possible escape routes.

He notices that none of Will's shoes are missing and that his keys are in their usual spot, on the cabinet beside the door. It means that Will is still here.

"Will?" Hannibal calls again, louder this time.

His ears perk up at the sound of faint shuffling coming from the bedroom. If Will is in the apartment, why is he not answering?

Maybe he's in trouble. Hannibal doesn't know what's going on, and the presence of Freddie Lounds's perfume combined with Will's unresponsiveness are bad signs. He grabs the decorative bust of Michelangelo from the desk and inches his way towards the closed door of the master bedroom.

Suddenly, the door opens and Will pads out sleepily, rubbing his eyes. Hannibal relaxes slightly at the sight of him, unharmed and alone, but does not let go of his makeshift weapon.

"Oh, you're back already?" Will yawns. He looks at Hannibal with clearing eyes and quirks an eyebrow. "What are you doing with Michelangelo?"

Hannibal is still on edge, the nauseating scent of Freddie Lounds's perfume invading his senses.

"Will," he cuts lowly. "Why does our apartment reek of a dead woman?"

His eyes burn into Will's for a few seconds before Will raises his hands in a calming gesture. "I can explain, Hannibal. I can, but... it's better if I show you."

Hannibal is torn. He wants to trust Will, he wants it more than anything, but his survival instincts are screaming at him. Hannibal's grip tightens on the bust, and before he can do anything, Will notices the movement of his fingers and swallows.

"I know what you're feeling right now. I *see* you," Will murmurs. "Please, Hannibal. Follow me to the dining room, and if you still want to kill me after I show you, I understand."

Hannibal is not reassured by Will's words. If he's giving Hannibal consent to hurt him, then he must feel incredibly guilty about whatever he's done. Hannibal's heart aches as his mind comes to the most rational conclusion, and his feet move to follow Will into the dining room. The scene that fills his vision makes him gasp and he automatically drops the bust onto the floor.

Freddie Lounds is displayed on their dining room table. She is face-up, naked, and impaled on a series of sharp objects that Hannibal realizes, as he steps closer breathlessly, are the stolen torture instruments from his exhibit. Freddie Lounds's body is remarkably unburnt and quite freshly expired, dried blood crusting on her chest. Hannibal's eyes widen and he stumbles even closer, close enough to see wide cuts on her breast.

The entire arrangement is a beautiful imitation of the first body he left for Will — Cassie Boyle, in the field.

He can't look away from the display, not even to look at Will. Hannibal isn't able to do anything except grip the back of a chair to hold himself up and attempt to regulate his unsteady breathing as his heart swells at what he's seeing.

He understands immediately. Will has betrayed him, lied to him, about Freddie Lounds. It was doubtless part of the plan with Jack to lure Hannibal into being caught. That betrayal cuts Hannibal deep, but what Will has done now heals that wound at almost the same time it is created. Because *Will is apologizing*.

With Freddie Lounds's murder and incredibly romantic display referencing back to the first murder Hannibal did for him, Will is confessing to Hannibal and asking for his forgiveness. His sins aren't the only thing he's confessing, either. Will is telling Hannibal, through this stunningly macabre tableau, how he feels about him. It's an apology, a confession, and a love declaration all at once, and Hannibal has never seen anything more beautiful.

With tears in his eyes, Hannibal takes a shuddering breath. His chest warms with pride and fondness for his beloved. This is the first time Will has killed anyone with foresight, and it was for Hannibal.

Will could have kept his betrayal secret from Hannibal for a long time. He could have even killed Freddie Lounds quietly, ensuring that she was out of the way and Hannibal would never know the truth. But instead, Will chose to enlighten Hannibal about his deception by offering Freddie Lounds to him.

The betrayal does sting, but it's nothing compared to how smitten and frankly aroused Hannibal feels right now. The gravity of what Will's telling him, what Will's *done* for him, are what's causing Hannibal's tears to fall. There are no more secrets between them now, with Will's confession and proclamation. Will is choosing to be with Hannibal, completely and genuinely, and is ready to accept any consequences for his past mistakes.

Because that's what Freddie Lounds clearly is — a mistake. And who is Hannibal to deny his beloved the forgiveness he so clearly craves?

"What do you think?" Will asks quietly, nervously breaking the silence.

Hannibal finally tears his eyes away from Will's gift and meets his partner's anxious gaze with soft, wet eyes.

"I forgive you, mylimasis."

We named this chapter Lungo on purpose, now you understand why ;)

Shakerato

Chapter by [memequeen1127](#)

Chapter Summary

“I forgive you, mylimasis.”

Will gasps, his heart pounding as he meets Hannibal’s stare over Freddie’s body. “You forgive me? R-Really?”

Hannibal, looking just as breathless as Will feels, releases his grip on the chair and lurches toward him, clutching onto Will as if he was a liferaft.

“Really. Truly,” Hannibal smiles, eyes alight. “My darling, darling boy.”

Chapter Notes

This chapter is so soft, we hope y'all enjoy <3

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Will gasps, his heart pounding as he meets Hannibal’s stare over Freddie’s body. “You forgive me? R-Really?”

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“Really. Truly,” Hannibal smiles, eyes alight. “My darling, darling boy.”

Will gasps, this time in overpowering relief, and he slumps into Hannibal’s arms as all the tension leaves his body at once. He’s almost shaking, and automatically eases the cacophony of emotions inside him by leaning up to press his lips against Hannibal’s in a bruising kiss.

What Will intended to be a cathartic kiss quickly turns into something more, something that drips of newly discovered truth and forgiveness. They match each other with passion of which neither have the means to express out loud, but Will gives and receives the messages in complete clarity with each brush of his mouth against Hannibal's.

I'm sorry, and I forgive you. You're incredible, and I'll do anything, kill anyone, if it means I get to have you.

Will is vaguely aware of his feet moving, but it's hard to tell since his head is spinning like he's drowning and flying at the same time. The bedroom door hits the wall with a solid thud, but they've only got ears for each other. Lips refuse to part even for a second, hands fervently tug on hems of their shirts, hips long for friction; neither able to pull away from one another, like magnets with opposite polarities.

Will isn't exactly sure when and how they end up on the bed. All he can see and feel is Hannibal's weight pinning him to the mattress, enveloping his body, the embrace overpowering but endlessly comforting.

His muscles are still aching from the hard work of creating his murder tableau, and he is tense all over with nervousness and fear regarding Hannibal's reaction to that display. There is a chaotic parade of emotions dancing around in Will's head: the half-disgust, half-delight he feels about murdering Freddie Lounds, the profound relief following Hannibal forgiving him, and the subsequent craving to be caressed and held by the man. The man that Will *killed* for, and would kill for again, without hesitation.

He raises his exhausted arms and attempts to pull Hannibal's shirt off, to feel the warmth of his chest, chasing the skin-on-skin contact, but Hannibal's hands gently catch his arms and guide them back down.

"Shh, darling. Let me take care of you," he says softly, placing another small peck to Will's lips.

And Will obeys, melting into the mattress under Hannibal's hot touch, like a candle melting under fire. He watches impatiently as Hannibal sheds his clothes, and moves his limbs when

prompted to help Hannibal rid him of his own pants and shirt. Every cell of his body is screaming to kiss and be kissed, touch and be touched, love and be loved. And it seems like Hannibal can read his thoughts, because he is back on the bed, covering Will's body with his own, cherishing every part of Will's skin with his hands and mouth, his fingers and tongue.

To say that he feels like he is on fire would be an understatement. There are fireworks erupting inside Will, electric currents tingling in his nerve endings, flames igniting in his heart, burning with affection and passion for his beloved. Yet it's not enough. Will wants more, he wants to be as close to Hannibal as possible, in every sense of the word — physically, sensually, mentally. He wants to feel Hannibal on and within every inch of his body. Because Hannibal is his, and he is Hannibal's, and there is no real distinction between them anymore, the concepts of their selves blurred into one.

“Hannibal, *please* ,” he whispers, begging for one and all things at once.

He begs for Hannibal to shatter and rebuild him, dissolve him into a liquid state and resculpt him, fold his pliant body into whatever shape he wants. Words and sentences can't seem to form in Will's head, so he lets his hips do the talking, nudging Hannibal's thigh and starting to rub against it with intent. He almost manages to wrap his hand around Hannibal's growing erection, but then there's Hannibal's finger resting over Will's lips.

And Will falls silent, overwhelmed by the need to comply and please. Because there is nothing that he wouldn't do for Hannibal. Will would kill for him, die for him, leave his old life behind for him, deceive and betray everyone else *for him* . All for him. Will throws his head back, baring his neck to Hannibal's lips and teeth, hoping there will be blotches of purple to admire tomorrow.

It's only then that Will realizes he's crying.

Warm wet tears are streaming down the sides of his face and disappearing into his cedar-brown curls. He's filled to the brim with emotions: relief from not having any more secrets, remorse about lying to Hannibal, and the joy of being forgiven. And now, all those feelings are spilling out in a steady stream down Will's face. He has no strength nor desire to hold them in anymore.

Of course, Hannibal notices immediately and leans in to kiss the tears off Will's eyelids and temples, murmuring words of adoration and reassurance in their place. Will just sobs and holds him tight, arms clutching Hannibal's back, pulling him so close that he can feel his lover's heartbeat against his chest. A steady pulse, something reassuring that Will wants to hold onto like a lifeline. Something that he wants to feel pulsing within him.

Mindlessly, he parts his legs and lifts his knees and ankles in the air. Hannibal hushes him again, but reaches for the bedside drawer with nimble fingers. His lips meet Will's then, soft and languid. Not with his usual assertiveness and teeth, but with infinite tenderness instead.

Will always wonders how Hannibal — who's capable of limitless cruelty, killing dozens with no remorse — can treat him with such gentleness and care. Such *love*. Even though he hasn't seen Hannibal commit such lethal acts yet, he is well-acquainted with the aftermath of the unspeakable violence that those bare hands have inflicted upon others. It amazes Will how he lets those same hands roam on his body without fear, embracing the contact and craving more, always more.

He hasn't seen Hannibal kill yet, but he isn't going to ask or try to force it anymore. He knows he will see it eventually — a reward for his loyalty and patience. He trusts Hannibal, and he trusts their future.

For now, he just wants to get lost in the way Hannibal worships his body. The way Hannibal maps out Will's bones with his mouth — tracing his tongue along the clavicles, ribs, hip bones. The way Hannibal catalogues Will's muscles — running his fingertips across the biceps, pectorals, abdominals and quadriceps, pushing the thighs apart. All the while, he is working Will open with slick fingers.

It feels heavenly, and Will closes his tearful eyes and relaxes into the worshipful touches. But then Hannibal moves on to exploring his erogenous zones — a hand pumping his erection and a tongue swirling around his nipple — and Will is suddenly gasping and grasping and shaking and *wanting*.

“Ha- *Hannibal*,” Will whines, already leaking from a few light touches.

“Mylimasis,” Hannibal whispers. “*Will*.”

Will doesn't think he can stand one more moment without Hannibal inside him. His fingers feel amazing but they aren't enough, Will needs to feel Hannibal buried inside him, joining them together so deeply, so intimately, that nobody can break them apart.

Mercifully, Hannibal recognizes his desires and pulls his fingers out of Will only to budge the tip of his cock against his entrance. Will sobs, moving his hips to try and push Hannibal inside him before Hannibal kisses him, panting, and slides inside with one smooth roll of his hips.

Will cries out, eyes wide open but unable to see anything but stars as Hannibal starts thrusting into him with earnest. It's far from the first time they've had sex, but it feels like a first time. It's the first time they are together completely, with no secrets between them, just flaying themselves open for the other to crawl inside and feel at home.

There is a colossal typhoon of elation, adoration, devotion and pure euphoria inside Will, making him feel like he's going to drown.

"I was afraid you'd kill me..." he whispers, hoping talking will distract him from the overbearing emotions, "or worse."

Afraid that you'd leave me.

"I would never, my dear," Hannibal reassures softly, leaving small kisses everywhere on Will's face, "I could never do *either*."

Will's eyes fill with fresh tears as Hannibal moves inside him, where he belongs. Hannibal knows him like he knows himself, and Will doesn't have to speak for his lover to understand exactly what he's thinking.

It's hard for Will to think at all right now, with the mindless pleasure Hannibal is giving him. Each touch, each thrust from Hannibal feels like an exaltation. Will feels Hannibal's devotion and it makes him sob, because he knows he is not worthy of it. He betrayed his lover.

But his lover forgives him. Hannibal absolves Will of his sins with every kiss of his lips, every brush of his cock against his prostate, making Will ascend further into the clouds. He's going higher, and higher, and higher still until he's absolutely aching and begging for it.

"Hannibal - Stop, please, *I can't* , AH - *Hannibal!* Don't stop," Will babbles. "Please, please PLEASE!"

Will isn't sure what exactly he's begging for - for Hannibal to stop, or for Hannibal to never stop. The sensations are blurred together, quite like how Hannibal and Will are blurred. Thankfully, Hannibal seems to know, once again, exactly what to give him. He increases the speed of his thrusts, hands digging into Will's hips so hard he'll leave bruises. His panting increases with Will's keens, and soon enough the two of them are making so much noise it reverberates from their bedroom walls like an opera.

"Will," Hannibal pants, voice straining. "*My limasis* . My Will. Mine."

"Yours, yours!" Will almost screams. He's so close, his body tenses up and he grabs onto Hannibal's shoulders, sinking his nails so deep into skin that he feels blood. "Hannibal! *I love you!*"

Hannibal makes a choking noise and surges forward to bite into Will's neck deeply, also drawing blood.

"I love you, *Will*, " he moans, pushing deep inside one last time, and then Will is coming so hard he feels like he's ascending. He rides out the tidal wave of pleasure from somewhere outside his body, and is vaguely aware of Hannibal tensing and pulsing inside him before Will blacks out.

Will wakes some time later, at the feeling of a damp cloth cleaning the mess on his skin. He groans, shifting on the dirty sheets as best he can with tired muscles. Hannibal is above him when Will opens his eyes, pressing soft kisses to his cheeks and forehead.

“Okay, my love?” Hannibal murmurs.

“I’m okay,” Will confirms. He thinks about what just happened and laughs. “I’ve never come so hard in my life.”

Hannibal’s responding smile is all teeth. “I take great pleasure in giving you novel experiences.”

Will laughs again, stretching his arms above his head. “I know you do. But I think we give novel experiences to each other, wouldn’t you agree, Dr. Lecter?”

Hannibal hums and glances out of their bedroom door, where Freddie’s body is still visibly displayed on their dining room table. “I admit I quite like it when you surprise me with novel experiences. For the most part.”

Will grins and sits up fully as Hannibal redresses. Judging by the setting sun outside their bedroom window, it’s almost time for dinner.

He watches as Hannibal buttons up his shirt slowly, waiting for him to ask what’s obviously on his mind. Will *knows* Hannibal, he knows he’s thinking about what just happened, processing every single detail and curious about a few unexplained ones.

“Will...” Hannibal starts predictably, “Where are her lungs?”

Will’s grin widens and he winks at Hannibal. “Look in the fridge.”

Hannibal’s eyes widen in excitement and, as fast as he can without being too obvious, he walks out of the bedroom into the kitchen. Will hears him inhale sharply the moment he opens the refrigerator, and is almost tempted to leave the bed on his shaky legs just to see the look on Hannibal’s face. He resists, if only to settle back into the comfort of the soft covers and wait for his lover to create a spectacular dish for dinner.

“It was my turn to provide the meat,” Will calls teasingly.

The only response he gets is a huffed laugh and the bang of pots and pans as Hannibal takes them out of the cabinets. Will smiles and closes his eyes, content to wait for Hannibal to turn the lungs into some stunning meal. Besides, he needs some time for his legs to regain their strength. It feels like Hannibal fucked them into jelly, not that Will is complaining. Not at all.

He had been worried for a moment, anxiety tensing his muscles and shaking his hands as he watched Hannibal take in the display of Freddie Lounds. He was so still; Will could not tell what he was thinking. He was afraid Hannibal would only focus on the betrayal and lash out, instead of recognizing the tableau as a confession and grant Will forgiveness.

But miraculously, he'd been forgiven. Hannibal understood what Will was telling him, and accepted it — all of it, all of Will's past actions and his current feelings. Hannibal absolved Will of his guilt, and worshipped him like a sacrifice upon the altar. It was more than Will deserved, and everything he has ever wanted.

It's perfect. Not the fake pretend-perfect they were playing before, but now genuinely, truly perfect. Will wouldn't change a thing, and he doesn't know how he's gotten so lucky.

The smell of decadent, sizzling meat wafts into the bedroom and makes Will's mouth water. He thinks dinner should be about ready by now, and decides he can't spend another moment apart from Hannibal. He gets out of bed on shaky legs, gingerly putting his clothes back on and making his way to the kitchen.

Hannibal has left Freddie displayed on the dining table, which makes Will quirk an eyebrow. He leans against the counter and Hannibal smiles at him, just finishing up their meal.

“Lung au Vin,” Hannibal announces. “Ideally the lung would be marinated overnight, but I sautéed it in wine to give it the same consistency. Served with a simple rice pilaf and grilled vegetables.”

“I’m sure it’ll taste just as delicious as it sounds,” Will replies. “Quick question — why is Freddie still out?”

Hannibal’s lips quirk. “I’m sure you expected me to clean up, but as I went to do just that, I found myself hesitating. She makes a wonderful centerpiece.”

Will rolls his eyes fondly. “You just want to look at her while we eat her. She’s a visual reminder of my commitment to you. To us.”

“I never denied that.” Hannibal’s eyes twinkle. He picks their plates up and beckons Will to follow him to the table. Will does slowly, glaring at Hannibal and daring him to comment.

Hannibal says nothing but his grin is entirely too self-satisfied when Will finally plops down into his chair with a wince.

“Bon appetit,” Hannibal purrs.

Chapter End Notes

Is anyone worried about what conflict could possibly come next? ;)

Americano

Chapter Summary

“And you played along convincingly enough that he let you go?” Hannibal concludes.

Will nods affirmatively. “For now.”

“My brilliant, cunning boy. You did so well,” Hannibal murmurs, and Will instantaneously wants to melt under the praise.

Chapter Notes

Uh oh, the murder husbands have trouble in paradise once again!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

A few days after Will was granted forgiveness, he stops by the Palazzo to bring Hannibal lunch. They still have leftover lung from Freddie, and Will is happy to surprise Hannibal with some at work. It will be a mischievous secret between them, and Will knows Hannibal will absolutely love the gesture. He can't wait to see the pride and love exuding from Hannibal's gaze.

Will bounds up the steps with his lunch bag, only intending to drop off the food before doing some shopping. Hannibal's coworkers are still apprehensive about their relationship, and although neither Hannibal nor Will are ashamed of it, Will still wants to be respectful. He loves their life in Florence now, and the new, very pleasurable status quo is best maintained by Hannibal keeping his job.

Hannibal is predictably in his office, and glances up in surprise when Will sweeps into the room. His surprise quickly turns to happiness, however, and Will gets butterflies inside at the fond smile Hannibal sends his way. He really can't get enough of this feeling, and thinks he may just have to bring Hannibal lunch every day from now on to feed his addiction.

“What brings you here, darling?” Hannibal asks, standing up from his chair.

Will gently pushes the lunch box into his hands and leans up to kiss Hannibal on the cheek. "Thought you might like some leftovers."

Hannibal reaches out and grabs Will's hand tight. "Thank you."

Will blushes and rolls his eyes. "You're welcome, Hannibal. Enjoy your lunch, I have errands to run."

Hannibal nods, understanding the reasons why Will can't stay without either of them having to speak them aloud. It is a casual display of their deep connection, but Will still shivers every time he is reminded of it.

"I'm excited for you to come home later," Will murmurs.

Hannibal's eyes flash and when he smiles, it is the smile of a hungry, savage beast. Heat rushes through Will's body and he has to physically step away from Hannibal to control his arousal.

"As am I," Hannibal purrs.

Will takes a steadying breath to recover and shoots Hannibal a teasing grin.

"See you then," he says, then leaves Hannibal's office just as fast as he had entered it.

He is still smiling as he descends the stairs of the Palazzo and into the busy Via de Bardi, so preoccupied with thoughts of Hannibal in bed later that he almost misses it when someone falls into step beside him.

"Hello, Mr. Graham."

It's the man from the market, the man who Hannibal said was a police officer, aware of his identity as *il Mostro*. Inspector Pazzi.

"Hello," Will says slowly.

He makes sure not to address Pazzi by name, because he is not supposed to know his identity. The man is simply a friendly stranger from the market, who has somehow made contact with Will again. Will plays the part of an innocent man, a little freaked out by Pazzi's appearance. And truthfully, he is only half acting; being unexpectedly approached by the Inspector on the street is genuinely making him feel apprehensive and cautious.

"You're... the man from the market?" Will asks. "How do you know my name?"

"Don't be alarmed, Mr. Graham. My name is Inspector Pazzi, and I work for the *Questura di Firenze*," Pazzi responds in what's supposed to be, Will assumes, a soothing voice.

"The *Questura*?" Will blinks. "Have I done something wrong?"

Pazzi shakes his head. "No, Mr. Graham, but I am concerned about your partner. I have reason to believe he is a dangerous man..." He regards Will with sharp eyes. "Something that I think you are all too aware of."

Will resists the instinct to narrow his eyes and instead makes an effort to look as confused as possible, parting his lips and frowning quizzically.

"Hannibal? Why would you think that?"

Will is very concerned. Pazzi surprised him, ambushing him as he left Hannibal in an attempt to, what? Interrogate him? Garner his support? This was not supposed to happen so soon; Hannibal and Will were aware that Pazzi was watching them but they never considered that

he would make a move like this so quickly. Will feels a trickle of fear run through him, and he fights to keep his face calm.

Does Pazzi have evidence on Hannibal? Is he going to arrest Hannibal, and Will too if he refuses to cooperate? Or blackmail them, perhaps? It would explain the secrecy and why he approached Will inconspicuously in public.

Is that the purpose of his ambush? Will is not prepared to handle any of these possibilities at all, and he wishes Hannibal were here to help. Will is new at actively lying to law enforcement, and feels anxious that he'll mess up and give something away. He actively tries to pull himself together, concentrating on each step of his feet over the old cobblestones, and thinks.

He needs to find out what Pazzi knows. While he does that, he needs to make sure he doesn't give anything away. He needs to ascertain if Pazzi is lying to him, or if he truly believes that Will is an innocent victim in all this. Will calms down a fraction; he's always been good at determining what people feel and know. It's a function of his empathy, so he concentrates on his instincts and lets himself analyze Pazzi's design.

"I have heard of your work in America, Mr. Graham. I do something similar, and twenty years ago I came across a killer spreading terror in Florence. He was *il Mostro*, and his name was Hannibal Lecter."

Will gasps in mock surprise, purposefully stuttering in his step, his eyebrows raising up to his hairline.

"You may not have known about that part of him, Mr. Graham, but I think you know the true nature of Hannibal Lecter. I have heard what happened in America, and how you suspected him as the Chesapeake Ripper before suddenly you moved to Florence with him," Pazzi says gravely.

Will understands how it must look to Pazzi. Since his incarceration, Will had been very firm and unrelenting regarding his accusations about Hannibal being the Ripper. Of course, it would seem completely out of character for him to suddenly be romantically interested in Hannibal and move to the other side of the world with him. Will had this absurdity pointed

out to him by Jack, Alana, and others, but he managed to curb the questioning by telling them it's all part of his grand plan to catch Hannibal. Perhaps, he can fool Pazzi like this, too.

"It's clear that he kidnapped you, and is now keeping you hostage to prevent you from going to the authorities," Pazzi concludes.

Considering that Pazzi knows for a fact about Hannibal's sinister nature, it makes sense that he would think Will is being held captive by the Monster of Florence. For lack of a better tactic, Will doesn't question Pazzi's interpretation. He doesn't say anything, and instead gives Pazzi his best puppy dog eyes, looking as scared and cornered as possible.

Pazzi softens a bit. "I have some experience in abusive relationships. I can get you help."

Okay, this is something Will can work with. All his life he's been adamantly fighting against feeling defenceless and trapped, resenting being perceived as a victim. Maybe for once, it would be beneficial to deliberately play one.

"He'll kill me if I leave," Will whimpers, glancing around the street like he's afraid Hannibal will emerge out of nowhere. "Please, I don't know what to do."

"I'll keep you safe from him," Pazzi vows. "All I need in return is your cooperation."

Will swallows hard.

"I'm listening."

Pazzi takes hold of Will's elbow and steers him into an alleyway, sharp eyes flicking around to make sure they weren't followed. Will is a little amused at that; if Hannibal is following Pazzi, the poor Inspector would never know it.

Satisfied that they are alone, Pazzi releases Will's arm and speaks lowly. "I have evidence against him, but I need a witness to corroborate these claims."

"E-evidence?" Will stutters.

"I have security camera footage of Antony Dimmond and Fredrica Lounds entering the apartment you and Hannibal Lecter live in, and never leaving."

Will blinks. It was him who brought Freddie to the apartment, and the security camera would've shown that. How does Pazzi not find Will suspicious for this? If he outright confirms that he was the one who escorted Freddie in, without being questioned about it by Pazzi first, maybe it's going to make him seem cooperative and forthcoming in Pazzi's eyes? Will decides that it's a risk worth taking.

"I figured that Freddie was sent here to investigate us, that she was working with the FBI, so I asked her to help me. There was evidence in the apartment I wanted her to take, but Hannibal discovered us and..." Will trails off and casts his eyes towards the ground.

The confession seems to earn Pazzi's trust. He pats Will's arm in a compassionate gesture.

"He won't hurt you, I promise," Pazzi rumbles. "Come with me, now. We'll go tell the *Questura*, give them the footage and your testimony. Then, they will help you get back to America."

Tell the *Questura* ? Will replays the Inspector's words in his head. Do they not already know about this? Is Pazzi working alone?

"The police... they don't know about Hannibal?" Will asks cautiously, biting his lip in a display of nervousness.

"Not yet," Pazzi confirms, "We're doing this covertly to avoid attention, for now."

Will nods, falling silent for a moment and letting a wave of relief wash over him. Thoughts are whirling through his mind like a hurricane.

If Pazzi is working alone, behind the police department's back, it means he is the only one who knows that Hannibal is *il Mostro*. Which, in turn, means that all Will and Hannibal need to do to make this newly-arisen threat disappear is to kill him, as quickly as possible, before he notifies all of the Florence police department, who would then notify Interpol and the FBI.

The only complication in this seemingly simple plan to protect his life with Hannibal is that Pazzi wants Will to come talk to the police right now. And of course, there is absolutely no way Will can let that happen. He hastily tries to recall all the information Hannibal has given him about the man, hoping there will be something he can use to his advantage.

He remembers Hannibal saying that all those years ago, Pazzi was onto him, but was not able to substantiate his accusations in front of the *Questura* because he didn't have any incriminating evidence, and his career and credibility suffered greatly as a result. Perhaps, this is something Will can use to stall Pazzi for now, leaving him time to warn Hannibal.

"It's not going to be enough evidence," Will objects hesitantly, pretending to fret. "They will find him not guilty. And he's going to find me and kill me for this..."

"Combined with my footage, your testimony will be enough. Let's go, now. I'll keep you safe," Pazzi insists, nudging Will's arm impatiently.

Will feels an internal panic start to set in. He needs to shake Pazzi off, he needs to tell Hannibal about this development, he needs to play the victim. When he next speaks his franticness is evident, but thankfully it fits with his design of fooling Pazzi.

"There's more evidence at the apartment. I've been trying to get proof... I've been recording our conversations," Will rambles in a shaky, tense voice. "I think I managed to get something on tape that would qualify as a confession."

Pazzi's eyebrows rise in pleasant surprise. Will chuckles internally at the sight, and instantly relaxes. He's awfully proud of himself. He's used the same trick twice now — lying about having evidence in the apartment — to deceive both Freddie and Pazzi.

"You should've said so earlier," Pazzi sighed. "Let's head there, then."

"No, it's better that I go alone. Can't have him suspect anything," Will protests quickly. "I'll meet you later. Somewhere safe."

Pazzi agrees somewhat reluctantly, and they exchange numbers. Will promises that he will call later that night to arrange a time and place for them to meet. When Will finally shakes him off, there is an uneasy feeling in his stomach, and he can sense the Inspector's inquisitive eyes on his back until he turns a corner and disappears from the view.

He heads straight home, wishing Hannibal would return from work as soon as possible and not after several excruciatingly long hours. Will spends the entire time in the apartment, pacing anxiously from one room to another, scared to step outside in case Pazzi is watching him.

After what feels like an eternity, he hears the lock click on the front door and Hannibal's familiar footsteps enter their small abode.

"What's wrong, darling?" Hannibal asks straight away. There is concern and caution in his tone, similar to how he sounded when he realised Freddie Lounds was in their apartment.

Somehow, Hannibal can instantly tell when Will is agitated, can probably *smell* his nervous sweating in the air or something like that. Will finds himself thinking that he's such a terrible person, worrying his partner after he'd just come home after a long day at work, again. That's twice in a week now.

"I'm okay," Will hurries to reassure, "but Inspector Pazzi practically jumped on me as soon as I left the Palazzo today. We have a huge problem, Hannibal."

Hannibal's eyebrows rise with concern and he invites Will to continue.

“He has evidence.”

“After 20 years, finally? It seems that persistence indeed pays off,” Hannibal muses in a calm and nonchalant, perhaps even mocking, way. However, his humor does nothing to ease Will’s racing mind.

“No, about the recent stuff. Security camera footage from our apartment building, showing Antony and Freddie going inside.” Will’s pace of talking quickens as he goes on.

Hannibal glides across the room smoothly and wraps his arms around his lover, placing a hand on Will’s back with the intention to soothe him. His other hand finds its way to Will’s hair, carding through the messy curls in a gentle, grounding manner.

“Did he threaten you with it?” he asks softly.

“No. He... thinks I’m a victim. He thinks you kidnapped me and that I’m too scared to leave.”

Will hears Hannibal chuckle at the words, amused by how astonishingly clueless Pazzi is.

“And you played along convincingly enough that he let you go?” he concludes.

Will nods affirmatively. “For now.”

“My brilliant, cunning boy. You did so well,” Hannibal murmurs, and Will instantaneously wants to melt under the praise.

He feels his anxiety subside under Hannibal’s skillful hands rubbing his back and head. He rests his cheek against Hannibal’s chest and sighs.

“He expects to meet me tonight to help me run away.”

Hannibal hums. “Looks like we’ve got a busy evening ahead of us, then.”

Will lifts his head to see a devious and complacent smirk spread across Hannibal’s face, and he can’t help but smile in return. Being held in Hannibal’s arms worked wonders on his nerves, making them fade away completely. With Hannibal by his side, Will feels invincible, like nothing or no one can hurt him.

“We need a plan,” Will says after a moment.

Hannibal continues to pet his hair. “Do you have any suggestions?”

“Well. We can’t let him live, considering what he knows,” Will pauses and bites his lip, suddenly remembering the past instances of him unsuccessfully trying to persuade Hannibal to kill someone. This situation is different though, it has to be. This time, their freedom is at risk.

“We most certainly can’t, my dear,” Hannibal agrees, “I’m curious if you have a design in mind.”

Will hesitates. “I haven’t thought that far yet.”

He’s sure thinking about it now though. They’ll have to kill Pazzi in their apartment, working together to make sure Pazzi can’t make too much noise and alert the neighbors. Will was lucky to have the element of surprise with Antony and Freddie, but Inspector Pazzi is an experienced officer of the law and will surely put up a fight after a slight second of surprise.

Will shudders against Hannibal’s chest. He can already picture it, how Will will lure Pazzi into their apartment and how Hannibal will stalk up behind his back. Hannibal will make sure

he can't make a sound and tear into him, either with a knife or his teeth. Will's heart races at the mere thought of Hannibal, covered in blood, looking at him while he kills Pazzi. He wonders if Hannibal will look wild, or calm, or proud.

He will be proud, because Will is going to join him in the carnage. He wants to hunt with Hannibal, to actively share in violence together. Hannibal was there when Will killed Antony, but he didn't do anything. Will's breath catches at the mental image of the two of them, circling Pazzi but only staring at each other, before they lash out in one shared movement and take Pazzi down together in a wave of blood.

They will kill Pazzi together. That is his design.

"I'll figure out the display later," he answers, breathless. "I just know I want us to do this together."

Will feels Hannibal's heart quicken beneath his cheek and smiles. It makes him ecstatic to know that Hannibal wants this just as badly as he does.

"That sounds perfect, mylimasis," Hannibal purrs.

And that's it. They don't discuss the details, they don't talk about who's going to do what when Pazzi arrives. Will doesn't *want* to know - he wants to let their instincts take over, and see how well they complement each other as they kill. He wants to blur with Hannibal as they hunt, surrendering to all his dark impulses and snapping perfectly in sync without having to plan for it, because if he has to plan for it then it's not real.

Will lifts his head from Hannibal's chest to make heated eye contact. He can tell his lover is excited and hungry for whatever will happen tonight, and Will finds that he is as well.

Chapter End Notes

As always, comments are very much appreciated! <3

Corretto

Chapter Summary

He has always felt elated after killing someone, but killing with Hannibal fills him with pure ecstasy that's out of this world. Will dealt the final blow, but that hardly matters. What matters is that they worked together in a fight, that they were completely in sync without speaking a word, that they saw what each other looked like in the heat of battle, that they loved what they saw.

And most importantly, that although their personal styles of violence are undeniably different, their bloodlust is the same.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Thanks for coming,” Will hushes anxiously, ushering Pazzi inside the apartment.

The Inspector steps in and looks around warily as Will makes sure the door is firmly locked behind them.

“Why did you bring me here?” Pazzi asks skeptically. “We were supposed to meet in a safe place just outside the town.”

“I figured that if he came home early and caught me packing my bags, he'd kill me. You're law enforcement, you can protect me,” Will explains.

Pazzi doesn't look impressed by Will's reasoning. “So are you.”

“If I could fight my way out of this alone, I would've long ago,” Will snaps, his voice bitter.

Pazzi shrugs, admitting that Will has a point. He moves around cautiously, keeping his back close to the walls, making himself difficult to attack from behind. Clearly, he's expecting Hannibal to ambush them at any point. Will has to give the man credit; he isn't as stupid as he sometimes seems.

"So, where's the recorded confession?" Pazzi queries, shifting his weight from one foot to the other in an antsy manner.

He's obviously itching to get out of the apartment as soon as possible, and Will doesn't blame him. Unfortunately for Pazzi, he won't be getting out, and it's Will's job to ensure that.

"Bedroom. I had to hide it well."

Will leads them into the bedroom, and Pazzi's features contort at the sight of it. Will reads the emotions on his face as distaste, distress, and even compassion, as the man imagines Will having to endure sharing a bed every night, and undoubtedly having to be intimate, with a ruthless serial killer. Ironically, intimacy with Hannibal has been the most satisfying human connection Will has ever experienced in his life. He expects Pazzi to make some kind of a pitiful comment about his and Hannibal's sex life, but the man lets him preserve his dignity and doesn't say anything.

Will crouches down and shuffles around the boxes stacked under the bed, pretending to be looking for something specific. He then makes it look like he's trying to pry open one of the loose wooden floorboards that covers a supposed hiding place. He motions for Pazzi to come closer, hoping to lure him close enough that he'd be standing in front of the walk-in wardrobe, where Hannibal is lying in wait. Will sincerely hopes that the Inspector's curiosity and excitement about finally getting to catch *il Mostro* get the best of him and cause him to let his guard down, even for one brief moment.

Because one brief moment is all Will and Hannibal need.

Pazzi takes one step towards Will, crossing the front of the wardrobe, and Hannibal bursts out immediately. He wraps a strong arm around Pazzi's neck, trapping him in a chokehold. Pazzi's eyes fly open and his instincts kick in, leaning to the side and jamming his elbow backwards to hit Hannibal's groin.

Will doesn't have any time to find his bearings because Hannibal releases his grip on Pazzi with a pained grunt, so Will hurries to punch Pazzi in the face before the man can make another move. The hit draws blood but Pazzi doesn't seem phased; instead, he lashes out at Will with a blow of his own.

The fist connects hard with Will's cheek, but the pain doesn't bother him. He grins, loving the flash of agony and the adrenaline pumping through his body. Hannibal recovers from being hit in the groin with equal ease and calmly grabs Pazzi's arm, wrenching his hand back in a horribly unnatural angle with a *crack*.

Pazzi howls and clutches his broken wrist, while Will starts panting with arousal from watching Hannibal break a man's bones so effortlessly. Hannibal's eyes are burning into him, driving him to pick up the knife hidden in the covers of the bed and slash at Pazzi's throat.

The Inspector has just enough sense to lean backwards, away from the silver arc of Will's blade. As a result, his throat is only nicked, the small trickle of blood making Will snarl. He wants *more*.

Pazzi's lunge away from Will throws him towards Hannibal, and Hannibal takes advantage of their closeness by driving a powerful punch straight into Pazzi's kidney, making him cry out again. However, Pazzi doesn't let his pain overwhelm him and quickly turns to face Hannibal, punching him across the face with his uninjured hand.

The blow draws blood from Hannibal's mouth, and the sight only serves to feed Will's arousal further.

At this point, all three men are breathing heavily, but none are quick to attack. Pazzi's only advantage is speed, but with one broken wrist he knows his best action is to defend. Hannibal and Will are not rushing to finish the fight. They are content to play with their food, and revel in their first experience of shared violence.

Will's face is covered in blood and he suspects his nose is broken, but he doesn't care. The only thing he cares about is the way Hannibal is looking at him, right now, as they both regain their footing and circle Pazzi.

The air feels charged, and Will has never felt as alive as he does in this moment.

Hannibal breaks their eye contact first, darting forward to kick out Pazzi's knee, forcing him into a kneeling position. Pazzi goes down with a pained cry, unable to block the move from behind. Will locks eyes with Hannibal again, feels his heart in his throat, and then lunges down to sink his blade into Pazzi's soft stomach.

There is a flood of blood erupting from under the knife, coating Will's hands, arms, and chest. Will inhales sharply as he drags the knife to the side, cutting a deep slash across Pazzi's abdomen. He feels some resistance, most likely the inner organs and intestines, but Will doesn't let that stop him and simply grips the knife harder and applies more pressure. In some sick way, he even feels delighted, because he's getting to reach inside Pazzi so extensively.

Will is used to invading people's minds so profoundly, but now he's getting to invade their bodies equally deeply. It feels right, as if he is fulfilling what he was always meant to do. Somehow, he feels at home and in harmony with all his inner desires. He feels *whole*.

Pazzi's evisceration is accompanied by indiscernible gurgling and flailing arms as the man collapses face-first onto the floor. The fall pushes his innards out onto the wooden floor, creating a macabre cornucopia complete with blood seeping out to create a crimson pool.

Will straightens up, ignoring the mess and still tightly gripping the now-stained knife, and meets Hannibal's eyes.

He has always felt elated after killing someone, but killing with Hannibal fills him with pure ecstasy that's out of this world. Will dealt the final blow, but that hardly matters. What matters is that they worked together in a fight, that they were completely in sync without speaking a word, that they saw what each other looked like in the heat of battle, that they loved what they saw.

And most importantly, that although their personal styles of violence are undeniably different, their bloodlust is the same.

Will's chest is rising and falling quickly in a mix of overwhelming adrenaline and arousal. He stares at Hannibal, and his hands twitch with the need to touch, to feel, to be closer, *to do something*.

Hannibal is panting, eyes burning into Will's and body still hunched over imposingly. He looks like a predator, and Will's mouth waters. Hannibal is the deadliest of all killers, the most savage of all creatures, the most vicious of all monsters. And he is Will's. He is Will's to feed, to bring him bodies to sink his teeth into, to spill blood and tear flesh into pieces. And he is Will's to love, to make him purr under Will's caressing hands, to render him calm and mellow. He is Will's to tame, to claim, and to own, not as a beast keeper but as a lover.

"I wasn't sure if you'd go bowels out," Hannibal says, breathless. "I'm so pleased you did."

Will swallows, reaching his knife-free hand up to touch his blood-soaked shirt. He looks up at Hannibal from under his eyelashes and smirks. "It's the best way."

Hannibal's pupils widen and he growls, beyond words. Will is perfectly content with that - he doesn't want to talk anymore, either.

They collide over Pazzi's fresh corpse with the fierceness of wild beasts.

The air is thick with the smell of blood and sweat, combining together to form the sweet scent of maddening, carnal arousal. Although both their clothes are torn off in mere seconds, they are still dripping red all over, their bodies stained with blood that had seeped through the fabric. Will isn't sure whose blood it is anymore, and he doesn't particularly care. The heavy coppery smell of it, the rivers of bright crimson flooding his field of vision, the slippery sensation as he drags his hand across Hannibal's blood-stained, hairy chest... all of it fuels his need even further. The need to melt into each other, to rip into each other, and to mark each other. The need to *mate*.

There are teeth everywhere: biting down, tugging at flesh, piercing skin. There are hands; Will's palms splayed wide across Hannibal's back, and Hannibal's fingers gripping Will's sides. With every touch of skin on skin, Will wants it more and more. He wants all of it, he wants Hannibal, and he wants it *now*.

It feels like Will's vision is tunneling, seeing nothing but Hannibal, the sight being tinted red with animalistic desire. He backs his lover into the wall with urgency, hands pressing against Hannibal's chest and lips latching onto the side of his neck. He bites hard, bringing blood to the surface to form a scarlet-red mark and leaving imprints of his teeth on Hannibal's pale skin.

"I want you, *now* ," Will growls, accentuating his need with an insistent thrust of his hips.

Hannibal retaliates like the apex predator that he is. He tugs Will closer, even though they are already pressed flush against each other, enveloping him into an impossibly tight embrace, until it feels like the friction is going to burn the skin off his body, like there is no part of them that is not touching.

Their mouths clash together, jaws open and teeth colliding against each other. Hannibal's sharp incisors sink into Will's bottom lip and split it, drawing more blood. The metallic flavour of it excites both of them even further, for they are bloodthirsty beasts, hungry for the taste.

Will doesn't think he can ever get enough of this. Their respective desires, feeding off of each other, fuelling each other, and culminating in something dangerous and destructive, yet indescribably beautiful. It's heady, and addictive, and *right*.

Will soon finds himself forcefully flipped around against the wall, red stains blooming where his bloody face presses into the dainty wallpaper. Hannibal's hands are mapping the shape of his hips, following the curves of his ass, spreading the cheeks and rutting against them. His skin is on fire from where they're pressed against each other, but it's not enough. It's erratic and ecstatic, and Hannibal's a goddamn tease, and Will can't take it anymore.

"Hannibal, *please* ," Will whines from between his gritted teeth, begging his lover to stop teasing and just fucking mount him already. It feels so unfathomably good, but Will is burning to feel Hannibal inside, for them to be so intrinsically connected that there is no distinction between them.

For once, Hannibal doesn't waste time and immediately gives Will exactly what he aches for; a push of a finger into the eager hole between his asscheeks. He growls deeply and Will is already about to explode on his own in an earth-shattering burst of pent up adrenaline and arousal, but paired with the electrifying sensation of Hannibal working him open, it all becomes unbearable.

Will digs his nails into Hannibal's thighs in an attempt to ground himself, to make himself wait, to keep his hands away from his straining cock. His fingertips brush the scar on Hannibal's leg, the one inflicted by Will himself all those months ago. He presses along the raised mark across otherwise smooth skin, feeling a small tinge of pain echo through the matching scar on his own thigh - a product of his empathy, or a phantom feeling caused by his muscle memory, he isn't sure.

What matters is that Will can caress the flesh of his soulmate and feel the touch in the same spot of his own flesh. They are connected through identical marks, conjoined, two halves of one whole entity. It's an unbreakable bond, formed by mutual scarring and consumption, sealed with blood, lust, and sweat. A blood pact of their own kind; the joining of minds and bodies, more powerful and lasting than any traditional unions created by mortals.

Will drags his fingernails across the cicatrix on Hannibal's leg, sinking them in deep, knowing that right now, his lover would prefer the sharp painful sting over gentle caresses, just as Will does himself. The vicious scratch of his nails elicits a primal growl from Hannibal, making Will shudder. It's the sound of an ever-hungry beast ready for another feast. It's exactly what Will wants; to raise the devil from the pits of hell, to reincarnate the monster of Florence, and to soon be possessed by his otherworldly ravaging power.

In the burning, mind-numbing passion of it all, Will doesn't notice that Hannibal has extracted his two - no, four? - fingers from inside him, and is now pulling him off the wall and into a blistering-hot embrace. They end up falling on the floor in a tangle of naked bodies and impatient limbs. Hannibal is sitting spread-legged with Will on his lap, Will's back pressed flush to his chest.

For a moment, they still.

Will turns around to look at Hannibal, to marvel at him in his magnificent, lethal glory. There is blood all over him, drying onto his hair, dripping down his torso, staining the muscles of

his arms, and glistening on his teeth. Their foreheads meet as their eyes lock, sucking each other in. Will lets out a shuddering breath.

Then, he presses his hands against Hannibal's muscular chest, again, and pushes. Hannibal stretches out on his back on the floor, giving Will room to straddle his hips properly. Will does exactly that, taking a brief moment to align the head of Hannibal's cock with his opening, and sinks right down. He hisses at the sting, the forced stretch of his muscles, the uncomfortable feeling of being filled to the brim.

It's unpleasant, it always is at first, but the burn is drowned out by the knowledge that they are now fully connected. Then, there's the sensation of Hannibal's hand wrapped around his shaft, thumb swiping over the head, stroking him in the way that is just right. Will bites his lip and looks down at his lover.

Hannibal's eyes are dark with hunger, like two pitch-black windows into his demonic soul. Will stares into them, fearless, licking his lips at the ravenous desire exuding from every cell of Hannibal's body. His palms are still pressed against Hannibal's wide pectorals, not really to hold him down but to anchor himself. Will readjusts his hands slightly so that he can scratch and pinch Hannibal's nipples as he slowly starts to move his hips.

But after the first thrust there is no going slow, as the beast inside Will claws its way out at the feeling of its mate and demands to get what it craves. Will moves his hips faster and faster until he's bouncing on Hannibal's cock and his muscles are aching. Hannibal grabs onto his hips with a snarl and leans forward to lick the congealing blood from Will's chest. Will throws his head back at the sight and whines when Hannibal latches onto a nipple, sucking it so hard that Will knows he'll leave a bruise.

Will is panting with his frantic writhing on top of Hannibal's cock, trying to draw breath into his lungs when every bounce leaves him feeling breathless. He feels like his entire body is hot, hotter than hell, and the flames are pouring out of the core of him, right where Hannibal is thrusting inside him, brushing up against that spot that makes his blood boil.

Will arches his back and tugs Hannibal up against him, so that his mate's strong arms are wrapped around him and his big hands are guiding him up and down, increasing the pleasure between them. Will surges forward and attacks Hannibal's neck, teeth biting skin and tongue lapping at the drying blood. It is the blood of their enemy, and it tastes like victory, and Will can't get enough of it in his mouth and down his throat.

He keens when Hannibal starts thrusting up into him at the same time as he pulls Will's hips down, slamming their bodies together and making their joining rougher. Will feels like he's being devoured and all he can do is to sink his teeth and nails into Hannibal's flesh to devour in return, because that's what they are: two beasts consuming each other like they'd die of hunger if they didn't. Will almost wants to open up their thigh wounds so they can actually eat of each other's flesh again, but what's left of his rational mind knows that this isn't the time.

They are both very close to their respective peaks.

Hannibal is nailing Will's prostate every time and Will's making so much noise their neighbors must hear them but he doesn't care, he doesn't care about anything except their mating. His mind is spinning and he thinks his tongue may be hanging out, but then Hannibal crushes his mouth in a bruising kiss and he can't think about anything but Hannibal.

Hannibal, filling him and taking his rightful place inside Will's body and soul. Hannibal, embracing him with the fervor and passion that Will matches completely. Hannibal, the beast who had just *killed with Will* .

It's his heavy-lidded glance to Pazzi's oozing body that pushes Will over the edge and he comes, tensing in Hannibal's arms and coating their chests with his release. Hannibal follows not a second later, grunting in Will's ear and slamming him down onto his lap one final time before he fills Will with his own seed.

They collapse on the floor together, boneless. Will feels Pazzi's blood soaking his hair from where he landed in the pool of red and looks over to see Hannibal similarly afflicted. That might've been enough to get Will going again, if he wasn't absolutely exhausted. As it was, Hannibal reaches for Will and he snuggles closer into his mate's embrace, the beasts inside both of them purring in contentment.

"There's no going back from this," Will whispers, pure elation and excitement fluttering in his chest. He inhales deeply, smelling the blood and semen covering their filthy bodies.

"No," Hannibal agrees softly, petting Will's blood-soaked hair. "There really isn't."

Chapter End Notes

Only one more chapter left!!

Doppio

Chapter Summary

After they finish, Hannibal steps back to look at their first piece of art together and gasps. Will stands beside him and squeezes his hand, similarly breathless.

“It’s beautiful,” Will whispers.

Chapter Notes

The "painting" they make is [this one](#)

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They take a shower together, taking time to wash the smell of blood, semen, and sweat off their bodies. As the stench of death and violence drips down the drain, the vicious beasts inside both of them sink back into hibernation. Until the next hunt. Neither Will nor Hannibal knows when it’s going to happen, but they both know that it’s inevitable. This is their life now; a union sealed with the blood of their enemies.

As Hannibal rubs the stains off Will’s chest and neck, he discovers that the skin there has turned blooming purple, peppered with bruises and bite marks in the shape of Hannibal’s mouth. His own body has been marked in the similar way by Will too, and the hot water soothes the painful sting from his lover’s teeth into a duller, much more pleasant sensation. The sensation of belonging; of willingly surrendering his untamed self to his partner and exchanging loneliness for companionship.

They have been dating for a while, partners in bed and partners in life, but today is the day they became partners in killing. They are now irrevocably bonded in every possible way.

As they finish cleaning themselves, Will uses the opportunity to suck several more red marks onto Hannibal’s neck. Hannibal gives a few additional bites of his own, and together they step out of the shower. There is more work to do and they shouldn’t waste too much time, in

case Pazzi had informed his coworkers at the Questura about his whereabouts before Will and Hannibal ripped into him.

True to his reputation as *il Mostro* and the Chesapeake Ripper, Hannibal wants to display their most recent victim in an extravagant and artistic way. And because it's his and Will's first kill together, the tableau needs to reflect it — the novelty, the magnificence, and the beauty of it all. It has to be *perfect*, to display how perfect they are together.

As an avid fan of symbolism, Hannibal suggests that they recreate another painting of Botticelli, since the painter's work has always been the key theme in the relationship between him and Pazzi. Hannibal had been at the Uffizi Gallery sketching Botticelli's *Primavera* in pencil like he had done so in flesh when his and Pazzi's paths crossed for the first time, so it would be fitting to have Botticelli present, somehow, in his last encounter with the Inspector.

Will expresses an interest in the idea of Roman gods and what they represent, so they agree that Botticelli's *Venus and Mars* is a perfect compromise that satisfies both their tastes.

To Hannibal's pleasure, Will already knows of *Venus and Mars* and has the exact same vision for Pazzi's display as he does. Hannibal does not have to explain or discuss it with him at all save the initial painting selection; their synchronicity of the tableau is simply another example of their perfect joining.

Hannibal wishes that they could display the body in London, where the original Botticelli hangs in the National Gallery. He had recreated *la Primavera* in the same city where it was displayed, and it seems a shame not to do the same with this masterpiece. However, Will convinces him that it would be too much trouble, *and* too predictable for him. He explains that it's better that some of the small details are changed, to show the changes they have produced in each other.

Hannibal finds he quite likes that notion. He and Will have changed each other, and their violence should reflect that.

Since London isn't a viable option, they decide to display the body in the Uffizi Gallery. It's a significant place for their relationship, as that was where Will learned about Hannibal's past as *il Mostro* and where they exchanged promises of trust and honesty with each other.

Leaving Inspector Pazzi's body in the gallery is like an offering, a necessary sacrifice in order to reach the next stage of their relationship, one defined by utmost loyalty and devotion.

Sneaking into the Gallery at night is almost ridiculously easy. One perk of Hannibal's job at the Palazzo is special access to local galleries, including the Uffizi, outside the normal visitor hours. They effortlessly incapacitate the very few guards that are patrolling the building at night, and bring in Pazzi's corpse. They don't have much time to create the tableau before someone notices that something is wrong, but with the two of them working together and sharing the same vision, half an hour is all they need.

In their recreation of Botticelli's painting, Pazzi is playing the role of Mars, the Roman god of war. The title suits the man, since he came from a law enforcement background; the very same social institution that instigated the initial war between Will and Hannibal. If it wasn't for Will's job in the FBI and his determination to catch Hannibal, their relationship may not have involved so much manipulation and hostility. If Hannibal hadn't been forced to break Will's mind in order to save himself from being captured and prosecuted for his crimes, perhaps, they would've run off together sooner. Law enforcement and society's standards of right and wrong was what initially kept Will and Hannibal apart.

But now, that obstacle standing between their union has been defeated, and the murder tableau with Pazzi's body is a celebration of that achievement.

They strip the Inspector of his clothes to expose his tanned skin, all the blood and viscera previously washed off to make him resemble the clean image of Mars in the original Botticelli. They cover the man's nudity with one of their spare sheets from the linen closet, and Hannibal props his leg up while Will folds his arm and tilts his head back.

It almost looks like Pazzi is sleeping, if not for the bruises inked into his dead skin and the wide slash across his abdomen.

After they finish, Hannibal steps back to look at their first piece of art together and gasps. Will stands beside him and squeezes his hand, similarly breathless.

"It's beautiful," Will whispers.

This is the culmination of every murder they have done separately, every murder they have pushed each other into committing. This is the murder that abolishes them as competitors, and redefines them as partners.

By killing Pazzi, displayed as the god of war, *they* have now become the gods of war. Two gods, identically different, covered in the blood of all that dared to separate them. Because that's who they are — divine creatures, indestructible beasts, killing anyone and anything that dare stand in their way.

They decide not to recreate the Venus of the painting. There is no need, because the Florentine police — and eventually, the FBI too — will be able to easily tell which painting it is just from Mars alone. It's better that Venus remains an implicit connotation; although she can't be seen in the tableau, her presence is very much there. Venus symbolises Will and Hannibal's love for each other. They both agree that it doesn't need to be represented in a physical form for it to be real and obvious to everyone that knows them.

This display, along with the indisputable certainty that they killed Antony and Freddie, is their formal resignation from their previous lives, occupations, and selves. It's a goodbye letter to Jack, Alana, and everyone else that knows them. It's an open challenge to the FBI, the Questura and Interpol to chase them across the world, if they wish to. Will and Hannibal are together, and together they are invincible.

And uncatchable.

Hannibal's had counterfeit papers for him and Will for months. He obtained them in Baltimore and has carried them with him, ever since they ran away to Florence using their true names. He didn't know if he would ever need them, or if Will would ever want to disappear with him. Moving across the world is one thing, but doing it a second time, with fake identities that effectively kill their former selves, is quite another.

Hannibal hoped, and today that hope is being realized.

"Where should we go?" Will asks as he packs their suitcases on the bed. The floor is still bloody, and neither of them bother to clean it up. It's obvious that they killed Pazzi, and leaving the mess behind them for the authorities to deal with is amusing to both of them.

Hannibal hums, retrieving their fake identity documents and setting them next to the suitcases. “I was thinking South America.”

Will nods. “Somewhere unexpected.”

Hannibal smiles and wraps an arm around Will’s waist. “Anywhere in particular?”

“Hmmm... Cuba?” Will muses. “It’s not on the best of terms with the U.S.”

“Sounds perfect, darling.” Hannibal kisses his cheek. “We should head to the airport now, while it’s still dark. We can sleep on the plane.”

Will groans and goes back to packing their clothes. “I never have luck sleeping on planes. It’s a good thing I’m not tired.”

“Yes, I find it fascinating that you are still, as they say, *wired* from disposing of our dear friend Pazzi tonight. Are there any more interesting side effects to be discovered?” Hannibal wonders.

Will snorts. “If you’re hoping to join the mile high club, doctor, don’t be so obvious.”

Hannibal smiles again, pleased that Will never fails to practically read his mind. “But if I was less obvious?”

Will closes their suitcases and shoves the papers against Hannibal’s chest.

“You are always obvious to me, Hannibal,” he murmurs, eyes bright and teasing.

Hannibal leans down and steals a kiss right from the fountain of youth that is Will Graham's lips. They savor each other, relishing in their ironclad union and the optimistic prospects of their future.

"Come, mylimasis," Hannibal says fondly, reluctantly pulling back from Will's loving embrace. "Our flight awaits."

Hannibal stretches out in his first-class seat, watching the wing of their airplane glide along the runway. He has a glass of champagne in one hand and Will's hand in the other, and he couldn't be happier.

As the city of Florence becomes smaller and smaller and eventually disappears as they ascend above the clouds, so do their previous lives and identities. The flight is more than just a change of scenery. It's a transition into a new chapter of their journey together; leaving behind their past filled with mutual lies, secrets, and manipulations. As they fly through the night and towards the vivid and beautiful sunrise, Hannibal thinks of it as a metaphor for their bright new future.

He feels Will's fingers squeeze his hand affectionately, and turns to meet his lover's eyes. There is happiness twinkling in Will's eyes, and Hannibal is sure that it matches his own, just like everything else about them that matches each other flawlessly. Maybe they're going to keep exchanging sultry looks and subtle touches while impatiently waiting for the plane bathroom to become vacant. Or maybe they're going to fall asleep, heads resting against each other, still holding hands.

Either way, Hannibal knows that it will be perfect.

Chapter End Notes

It's finished!! Thanks for sticking with us for this story <3

We will continue this series with a final fic of murder husbands in Cuba ~

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!